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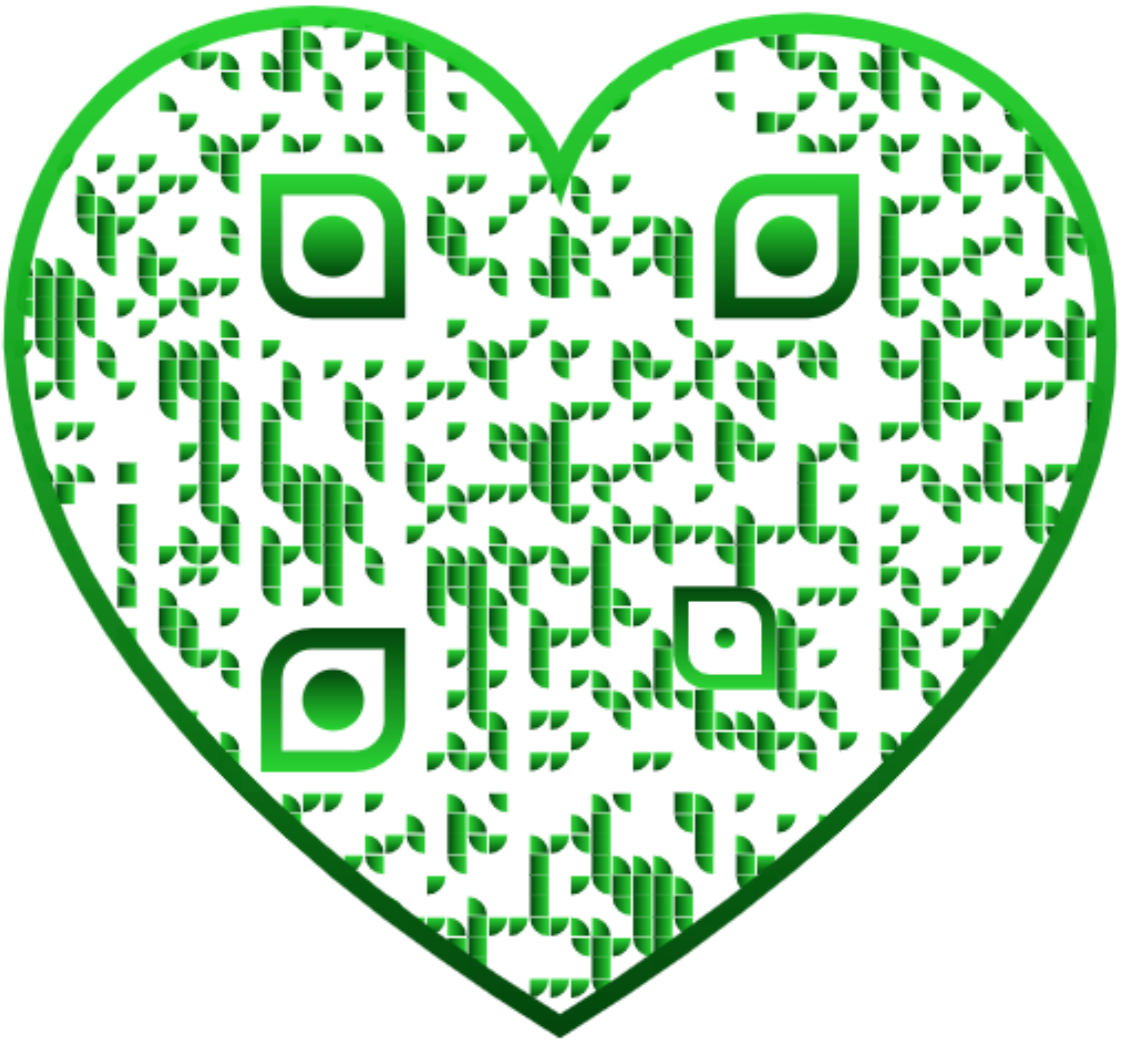

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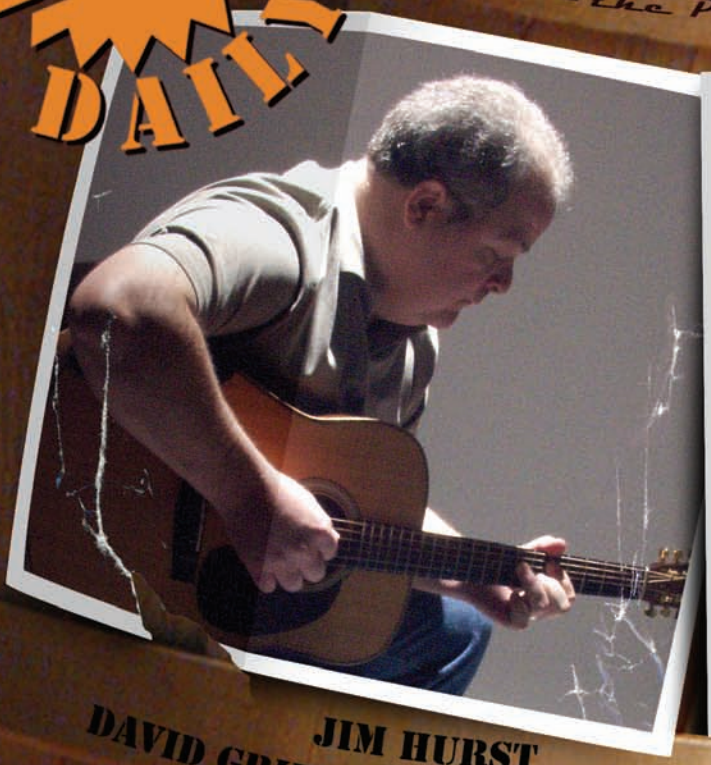

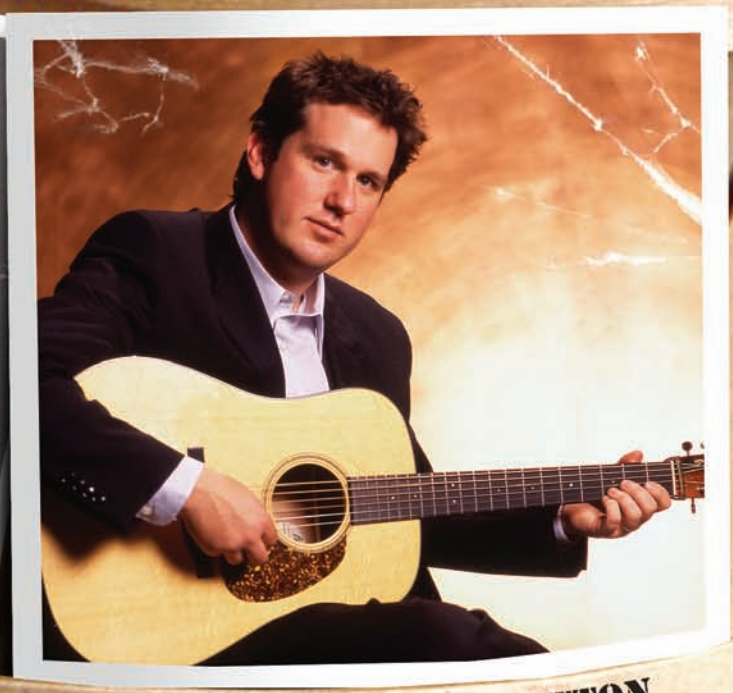

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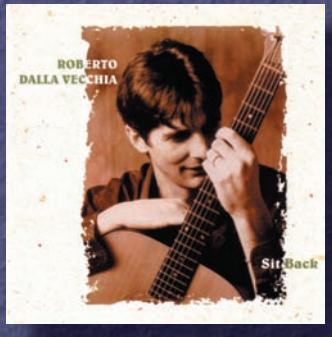

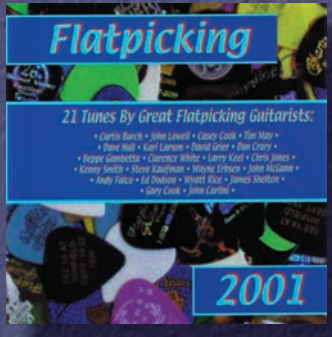

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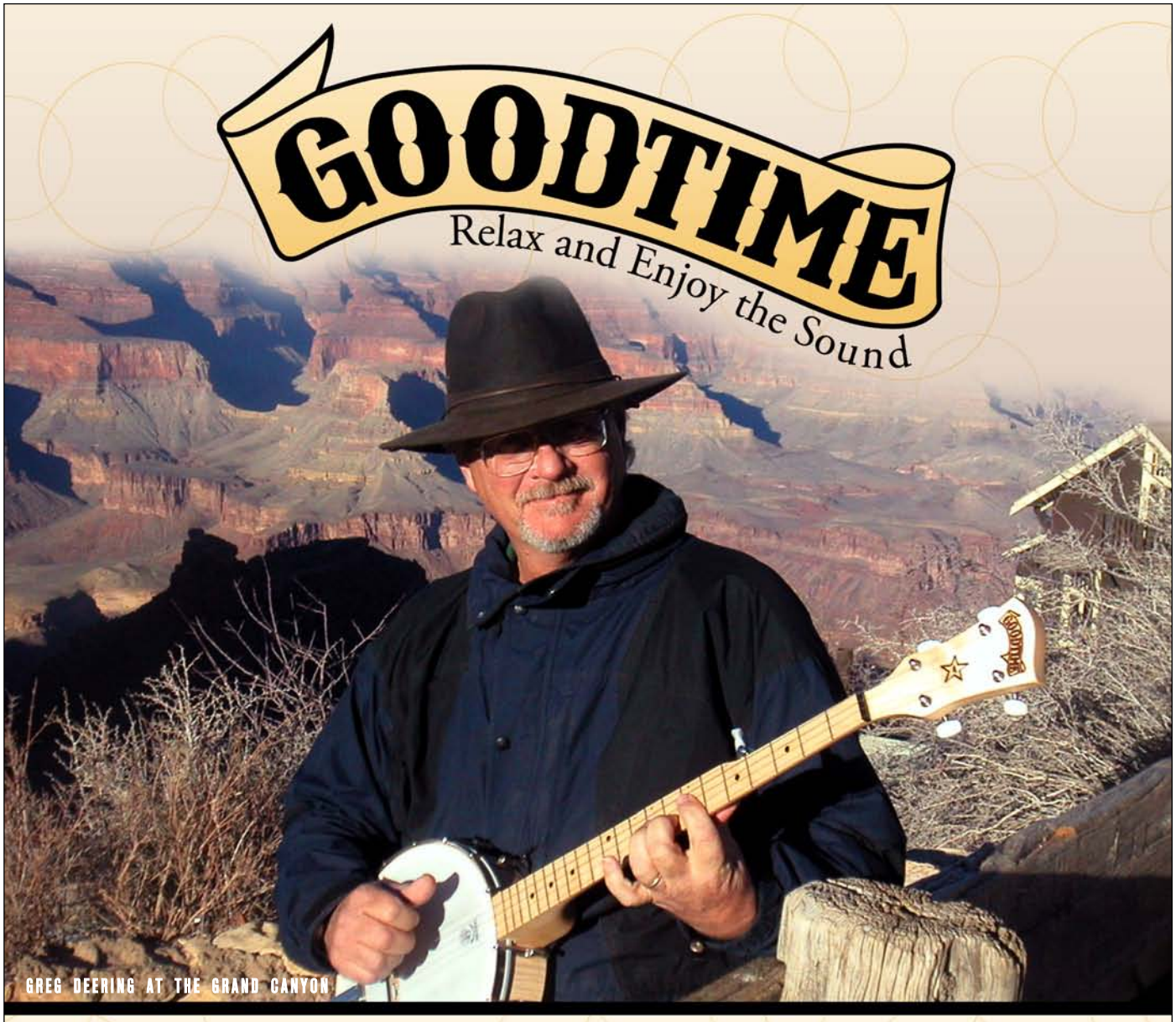

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How to Duplicate & Promote an Acoustic CD Release

1. **Send your music to radio.** No matter how you define your goals, you need to get your music to folk radio. One excellent way to do this is through a **radio-oriented sampler CD program**, such as the OASISACOUSTIC™ sampler CDs, which get the music of Oasis clients to hundreds of key radio stations throughout the U.S.

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EDITOR'S PAGE

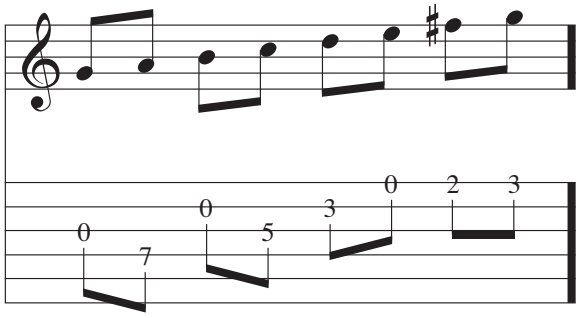
New Projects

We are currently working on several exciting projects here at *Flatpicking Guitar.* Coming soon we have the second volume of John Jorgenson's Gypsy Jazz instructional method, the Brad Davis *Flatpicking the Blues* book/DVD/CD, the Brad Davis, Cody Kilby, Tim May concert DVD, the new Tim May CD, and a various artist benefit CD titled Songs for Sophie: A Collings Guitar Collective. Keep checking out website for the release dates of each of these new projects

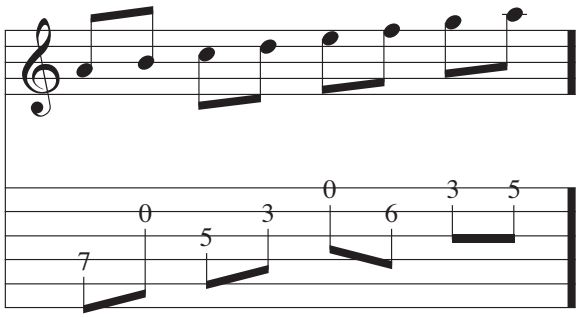
Correction:

In Kathy Barwick's column in the last issue we had a couple of mistakes in the Examples section. The correct G scale and Am scale (examples 1 and 2 respectively) are correctly printed below:

G scale



Am scale



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Tim May

If you were not fortunate enough to have caught a show by the Nashville-based group Crucial Smith during its fifteen-year run, flatpicking guitarist Tim May has probably managed to fly under your flatpicking radar. If that is the case, then get ready for him to pop up on your screen and be added to your list of favorite flatpickers because he is starting to fly high. While Crucial Smith was active Tim turned down a number of high profile touring and recording opportunities because he wanted to focus on the band. When word got out in Nashville that the band had dissolved, the offers came pouring in and Tim has been a very busy flatpicker. In the past couple of years he has toured with Patty Loveless, played on an all-star-cast Rounder project called *Moody Bluegrass: A Nashville Tribute to the Moody Blues*, and recorded a bluegrass gospel project with Charlie Daniels. Additionally, FGM Records is getting ready to release Tim's new solo CD and he is featured in a new FGM Records concert DVD with Brad Davis and Cody Kilby. If you own the *Flatpicking Favorites: Hot and Spicy* CD and have listened to Cody Kilby and Tim May tear up "Lonesome Fiddle Blues," you'll know why Tim is now getting called to play so many prominent gigs in Nashville. As they say here in southwest Virginia, "The boy can pick!"

If you have listened to Crucial Smith's music, either live or on CD, you may have assumed, like I did, that Tim grew up listening to and playing rock music as well as bluegrass and country. In the realm of bluegrass, the band was pretty progressive. When I sat down with Tim to conduct the interview for this article, I found out that this was not the case. Tim May grew up in Mississippi playing the banjo in a family bluegrass band. Tim's grandfather loved bluegrass and owned Bill Monroe records. His older brother, three years his senior, began learning how to play the banjo and guitar, but when he turned his full attention towards the guitar, Tim bought his brother's banjo from him. Tim dove into learning how to play the banjo and a short time later the May family—with older brother Ben on guitar, Tim on banjo, Dad on vocals, and younger brother Riley on bass—formed a band. While Tim continued to play the banjo with the family band, he said, "I heard Tony Rice and Dan Crary playing the guitar and I had to learn how to do that!"

When asked about learning how to flatpick, Tim said, "I've got to be one of the last guys that completely learned how to flatpick by slowing down records. Back then I would desperately try to find some kind of tab, but I couldn't find anything. Dan Crary was a really big influence, so I would find Dan Crary records and Tony Rice records, slow them down and try to learn what they were doing. I also listened to Mark O'Connor later, when I was in college, and that was an eye-opening thing. People think now that since Pat Flynn has been such a big influence that I had done the same thing with him. I tried, but I couldn't figure out

Written by Dan Miller

what he was doing. I mean, I would listen to that stuff, but he was so unique, I didn't get it. Now I can see it, but back when I was learning how to flatpick, my brain could not wrap around what Pat Flynn was doing. So before I met Pat he wasn't much of an influence because I couldn't figure it out."

Although he developed some flatpicking skills and built up a repertoire by slowing down recordings and figuring out what the professional players were doing, Tim says that he felt as if he was not progressing at an adequate pace because he could not improvise. He says, "For ten years I felt as if I was going nowhere. In Mississippi there was absolutely no one to show me what was going on. If I wanted to play music with people, other than my brother, I had to teach them how to play in order to have someone to pick with. And I found out later, I was doing it all wrong!"

When asked to clarify "doing it wrong," Tim said, "I was playing the notes like I heard them on the records, but my picking was way off. For instance, I felt that if you hit the G-string with a down stroke that you were not supposed to hit the D-string with an upstroke. It seemed odd to me and I thought, 'Well, surely they are not doing that.' So I would start a solo on an upstroke. It wasn't until I got to college and met a guy named Dave LaRouche, who showed me what was going on, that I started to straighten out my pick direction. I said, 'I didn't know you were supposed to do that!' I felt like there were about ten years early on where I gained what I should have gotten in two. The only shining light is that in learning how to play in isolation like that I developed my own thing more. It was so aggravating trying to find stuff that I just started jamming and coming up with my own stuff. My brother was the same way; we were kind of operating in the dark."

While he was still in high school Tim heard a guitar player named Kent Wells who was playing in the band Time of Day at Harding University in Arkansas. Tim was interested in attending the college and the band recruited for the school by playing gigs at various high schools and then talking to the students about attending Harding. Tim's goal was to audition for the band when he was ready to go to college, so he bought the band's album. Tim said, "I listened to their album and there was this flatpicking monster on there! I said to myself, 'The competition is just out of control! Is this the way it is in every small college in America?' The guy [Kent Wells] was incredible. His playing on the album pushed me. If he had been a lesser guitar player, I know that I would have said, 'Well, I can do that,' and it wouldn't have pushed me as much. But since I wanted to be in that band, I thought I needed to be at least as good as he was, so I worked hard at it. At the time, I had no idea how exceptional he really was. But it was good for me."

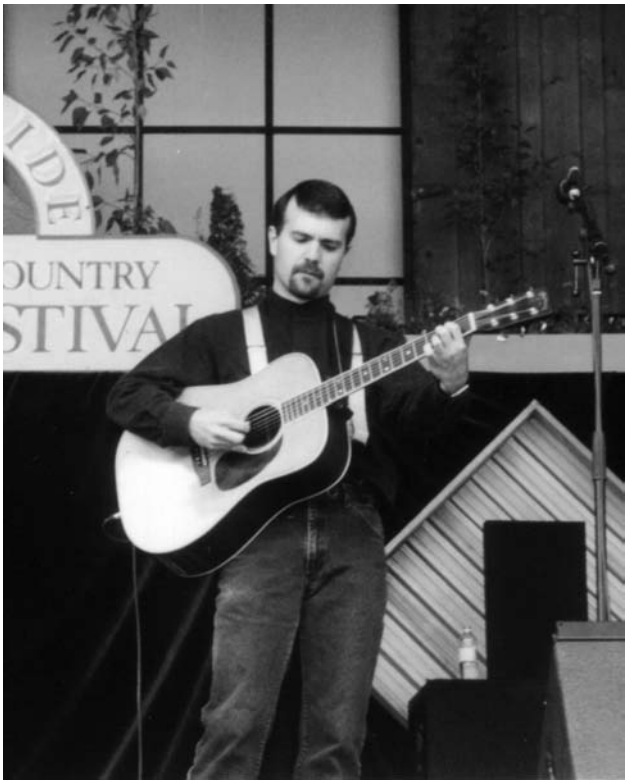
Tim did not end up going to Harding, but he did follow his dream of playing in a college recruitment band by auditioning for and getting a spot in a band called Wind Song at David Lipscomb College in Nashville. Regarding the decision to try out for the band at Lipscomb instead of Harding, Tim recalled, "I knew that I wanted to end up in Nashville and play music anyway, so it made sense to try out for the Lipscomb band." When asked about the band's function, Tim said, "What those bands did was go out and play at high schools and recruit for the college. It was a Christian college, so we mostly played at Christian schools. We would play for kids and say, 'We are David Lipscomb, come to school here.'" For Tim, the attraction of playing in this kind of band was that the school paid each band member's tuition. When asked about the band's repertoire, Tim said, "At that time (mid-1980s) country music was not very popular. It was out. So we would play a little bluegrass set and some country, but mostly it was pop and rock. It was a completely different musical format then you would have had even a couple of years after I graduated. Country hit big after I left."

Tim looks back at the experience playing with Wind Song favorably. He says, "It was a good experience because it introduced me to playing some different styles that I absolutely would not have approached in a million years otherwise. The guys in the band were electric players and were more schooled than I was, so they could show me what to do and guide me on the pop and rock stuff. It introduced me to pop culture and let me know what people were listening to outside of bluegrass. Previous to college I had never trained myself as anything but a bluegrass player."

Tim continued, "Kyle Wood played electric guitar in the band and he was a big Randy Rhoades fan. I listened to that stuff and I became a fan too. If you grow up and you don't listen to that stuff you don't think of guys like Ozzy Osbourne being legitimate musicians, you just think of them as crazy rockers. You don't realize the musicianship of people like Randy Rhoades or Eddie Van Halen. I began to discover that in college. They are some of the greatest guitar players that the world has seen. Kyle would get me in a room and say, 'You've got to listen to this!' He'd hold me hostage and take my musical education out of Mississippi. But then I'd declare a 'Flatt & Scruggs night' and I'd force Kyle and Dave to sit in a room and listen to Flatt & Scruggs at Carnegie Hall." [laughs]

Kyle Wood had grown up playing rock and roll music and had never really listened to bluegrass. When Tim invited him into the world of bluegrass Kyle was amazed that someone could play a guitar non-stop in the flatpick style. "He was astounded at that," Tim said. Although he had spent his whole life playing electric guitar, one day Kyle

Tim May with Crucial Smith at the Walnut Valley Festival



Tim May on stage at Telluride

told Tim, "I'm going to get a mandolin." Tim said, "He went home over Christmas break one year and came back playing all of these fiddle tunes on mandolin. He had never played mandolin before. That is where it all started."

It was during those college years that Tim says he made a great leap forward in his ability to improvise. Today Tim is a great improvisational player, but he said that it wasn't until he got to college that he began to learn how to improvise. When asked how he accomplished that, Tim said, "Basically Kyle and I jammed three to six hours a day for six years. I tell people all the time, 'You can sit around talking about improvising all day long, but if you can get somebody to sit in a straight back chair across from you and just wail on it—don't worry about it, and just see what comes flying out—that is the way to do it.' If you go to France and you want to learn the language, you start speaking French. You don't break into English. You do it and screw it up until you eventually get it. I think if you explore the guitar for just massive amounts of time, you also develop your own style. Even though I loved Tony Rice and Dan Crary, I basically stopped trying to figure out what they were doing. By the time I was in college I stopped learning other people's solos. I would listen to them because I loved their music, but I stopped pursuing their styles."

While he was in college, in addition to playing with Wind Song, Tim also played the banjo with country star Eddie Rabbitt. Tim recalls, "He had this song out called 'Tennessee Born and Bred' and he wanted me to play the banjo part as it was played on the recording. I told his manager, the guy who hired us, that I could handle it. The manager said, 'It was Bela Fleck on the record.' But I still thought, 'How hard can it be? It's on an Eddie Rabbitt album.' It turns out that while they were in the studio Eddie told Bela to play the craziest thing that he could think of. He told Bela that! So it is this crazy banjo lick that is like the hardest thing I've ever done in my life! It was the kind of thing where the band stops and there is this banjo thing. To this day I still don't know how Bela really did it, but I figured out my own way of doing it." Tim's Wind Song bandmate, Kyle Wood, was also in the Eddie Rabbitt band on mandolin.

Although Tim and Kyle were busy playing in two bands while attending college at Lipscomb, they also had plans of forming their own band and, working towards that goal, had recorded a demo. Kyle and Tim's mixing of rock and roll with bluegrass was certainly not something that was new. A number of progressive bluegrass bands had found this formula starting back in the seventies and none had been more successful at it than the Newgrass Revival. Interestingly, former Newgrass Revival guitarist Pat Flynn had enrolled at Lipscomb after Newgrass broke up and was attending classes at the same time as Tim and Kyle. Kyle found out Pat Flynn's class schedule, waited outside a classroom door and ambushed him, handing Pat a tape when he walked out of class. Instead of saying, "Hey, I came to college to get away from this!", Pat not only listened to the tape, but also called and said, "I'd love to work with you guys." Tim said, "So, we started writing and he produced us."

With Tim and Kyle as the core, an old buddy of Kyle's, Chris Joslin, came in to play banjo and Dobro and Dave Holladay joined them on bass, thus forming Crucial Smith. While many reviewers, DJs, and fans compared them to Newgrass Revival, Tim says that he feels like their material and arrangements were more along the lines of what J.D. Crowe and the Seldom Scene had done in the seventies. He said, "When I wrote a song, that is who I thought of. But the way we played it with that particular group of guys came across as being like Newgrass. But we never said, 'let's get that sound,' it just happened that way. Of course Pat had some influence too."

Regarding Tim May's guitar playing, Pat Flynn has said, "It has been a distinct honor and pleasure to know and play music with Tim May. Tim's ideas are at a depth and range that is rare and he expresses these ideas with a rich tone and confident touch. Tim always says that I influenced him, but the truth is that I learned something every time I played with him."

During the fifteen years Crucial Smith was together, the band recorded three CDs. Two were studio projects produced by Pat Flynn, and the third was a live recording that also featured Tim's wife, Gretchen, on fiddle. Although the band enjoyed some success, Tim says, "It got the point where we felt like we needed to take things in a different direction to see what would happen. We are still all good buddies. But after that long it just seemed like it was time to do something different."

Soon after Crucial Smith broke up, Tim got the call to play with Patty Loveless. He stayed on the road with Patty for about a year to help her promote her *Mountain Soul* album. He also toured with her when she went out to promote her Christmas album. Additionally, Tim announced the formation of his new band, Tim May and Plaidgrass. Although some members of Crucial Smith are with him in Plaidgrass, Tim says, "It is a different direction musically. A lot of the songs that I have written are still there, but we play a lot more of the Celtic instrumental music." Tim continues, "Before Gretchen came to Crucial Smith I felt like our instrumentals were weak. We wrote so much vocal stuff that it was like we didn't have the energy to write creative instrumental stuff. It was a shame because we all considered ourselves pickers as much as anything. When Gretchen came in the band, she brought in all of these great Celtic songs and Contra dance songs...just great stuff. So we began to play that and now Tim May and Plaidgrass has a heavier mix of

instrumental stuff than we used to do with Crucial Smith."

In addition to playing music, Tim is also skilled at woodworking and specializes in finish work. Tim's father, who was an instrument builder and woodworker, taught him this craft from an early age. Tim says, "I was always real interested in finishing for some reason, so I ended up working with my dad at historic sites, like Civil War houses. I learned a lot about historical preservation and restoration. That is what my dad did, and still does. He restores historical homes. I always leaned more towards the finishing, so I learned to do French polish. That is the way I kept myself alive during the years I was with Crucial Smith: I would do a lot of finish work pertaining to historical preservation. I did, and still do, a lot of French polish work on old furniture. I enjoy it. I also still build furniture and instruments. I've built a couple of guitars, three mandolins, and a couple of resonator guitars."

About three years ago Tim started working at The Violin Shop in Nashville doing violin repair. He met Dave Harvey at the shop and started picking with Dave on a regular basis. In addition to jamming together, Dave and Tim also pick with the Gibson Mandolin Club, which consists of Dave Harvey on mandolin, Tim, Brian Christianson (a fiddle player who also works at the violin shop), and Jon Weisberger on bass. "We do a lot of swing material in that band," Tim says, "and I'm having a great time learning that stuff. We all play Gibson instruments, so I play a Gibson L-7 when I pick with them." As a result of jamming with this group, Tim is now learning how to play Gypsy jazz music. "I feel like I'm going back to the way I was when I was fourteen, trying to figure out what is going on with the Gypsy stuff." For several years Tim has also played on the river barge The River Explorer with Dan Knowles. He has also played on the Grand Ole Opry with Dan.

Although he does not teach many private lessons on guitar, Tim enjoys teaching at workshops and seminars. "I enjoy teaching people who come to that kind of thing. I just did the Nashville Guitar College and I really enjoyed it because these guys are all on fire! But to take someone day-in and day-out...I've rarely had students who have had enough interest to keep it interesting for me. And I don't claim to be much of a teacher because nobody ever taught me. I guess in some ways that can be an advantage because I've had to take a close look at what was going on because I didn't have a systematic way of teaching," Tim says.

Tim said that one of the things that aided his development in putting together a systematic way of teaching guitar was learning the Nashville number system. He says, "It was then that I began to understand the mathematics of music. I learned what a '9' is and I discovered that it really wasn't this big mystery. I would listen to country radio for a few hours a day and chart songs. When I charted them, I'd look up what it was that I didn't know. I finally learned the system that way. Then I began to study and talk to a lot of people about theory in general...scales...the way chords were put together...then I was able to figure out what I was doing. Figuring out the numbers and how they relate to chords was a big thing. I think that helps with improvising too. If you can know the relationships of chords and how to play over them it helps. It has made a big difference in my playing to know what is going on."

One of the projects that Tim has recently been involved in, *Moody Bluegrass: A Nashville Tribute to the Moody Blues*, was the brainchild of Randey Faulkner. Randey's dream was to put together an album that was the bluegrass version of the Moody Blues music and he approached Dave Harvey to produce it. Dave called on Tim to write up all of the charts for the songs and then Tim (guitar), Andy Hall (Dobro), Dave Harvey (mandolin), and Andy Todd (bass) went into the studio and cut all of the basic tracks. After that was accomplished, Dave Harvey brought in a "who's who" of bluegrass' greatest to overdub different parts and sing the vocals. Participants included Harley Allen, John Cowan, Stuart Duncan, Charlie Cushman, Tim O'Brien, Alison Krauss, Daniel Carwile, Patty Mitchell, Jan Harvey, Alison Brown, Larry Cordle, Fred Carpenter, Bob Mummert, Jill Snider, Barry Crabtree, Sam Bush, John Randall, Lionel Cartwright, Russell Smith, Tom Shinness, and Keith Little. The project also includes the vocal quartet of Odessa Settles, Ira Wayne Settles, Calvin Settles, and Todd Suttle. Quite a line up! Tim said, "It is something that I am very proud of. It is very listenable and the vocal performances are just amazing." Rounder Records released *Moody Bluegrass* in the fall of 2004.

Another new project that Tim has been involved with recently is a bluegrass gospel recording by Charlie Daniels. Scott Rouse produced the project and brought Tim in along with Ronnie and Robbie McCoury, Jason Carter, Mike Bubb, and Andy Hall as the core band. Mac Wiseman and Charlie Daniels sang the songs live with the band and then a few other special guests, such as Earl Scruggs, Ricky Skaggs, and the Whites were brought in later. Tim said, "It was one of the most fun albums that I have ever done. Charlie was just like a quarterback in there saying, 'OK, you do this, and you do that' and within ten minutes he has an arrangement that is just killer. Every song was like that." The song list includes bluegrass gospel standards.

Tim May (far left on Dobro) with the Patty Loveless band

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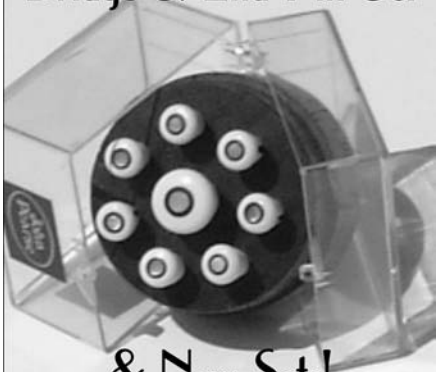
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Cody Kilby, Brad Davis, and Tim May preparing to tape a live concert DVD for FGM Records in December 2004

A few years earlier, Nashville producer Scott Rouse had been introduced to Tim when Scott was working on the music for a comedy video he was producing. The video stars Nashville comedian Shane Caldwell as Van Heffer, an effeminate Elvis impersonator who sings Ozzy Osbourne songs bluegrass style. Kyle Wood was brought in to play mandolin and he asked Tim to play the guitar. The soundtrack includes an Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath hit list, including songs like "Iron Man" and "Crazy Train" played by a bluegrass band and sung bluegrass style. Regarding his introduction to Tim's guitar playing, Scott Rouse said, "Van Heffer wouldn't have been as killer without Tim's playing. He is awesome. I used him on the Charlie Daniels Band bluegrass gospel album and he is one of those guys you can totally use to your advantage as a producer because he'll do exactly what you ask him to do. Then if you say, 'Why don't you lean into the solo a little on this one?' he'll haul off and lay it in there like a cop on a car thief. His studio manner is excellent and everybody loves him. Tim's my first call on all my bluegrass sessions."

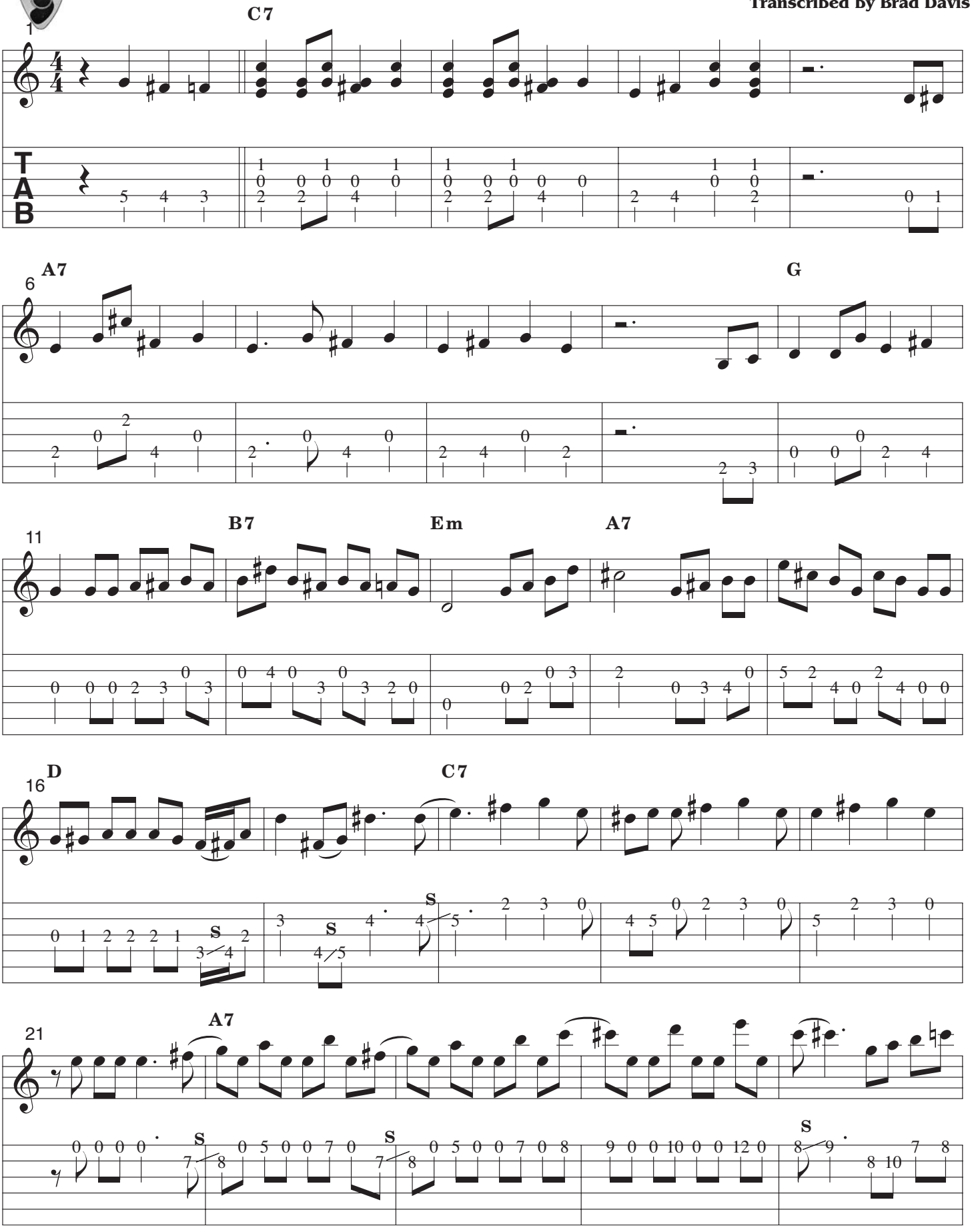
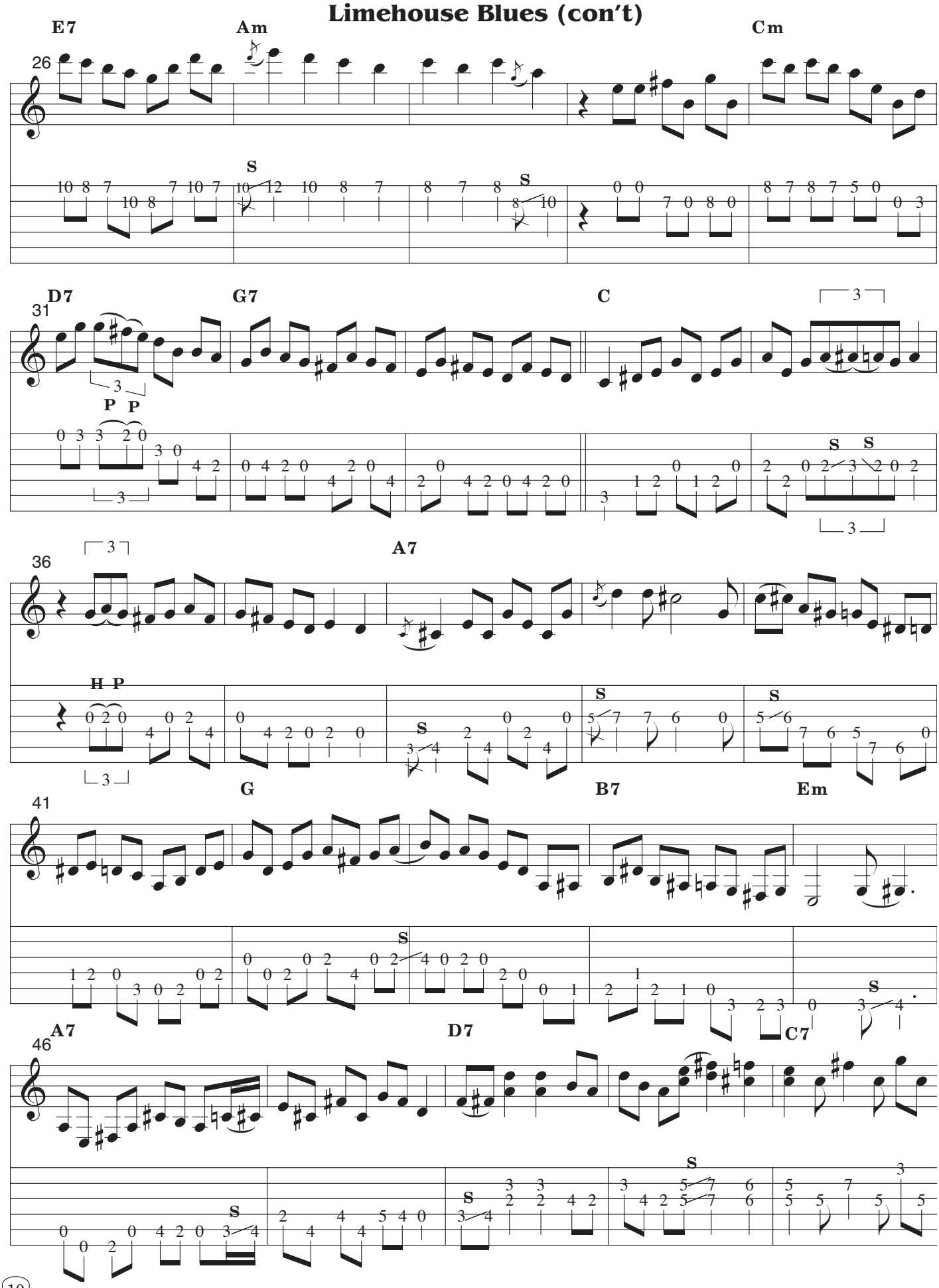
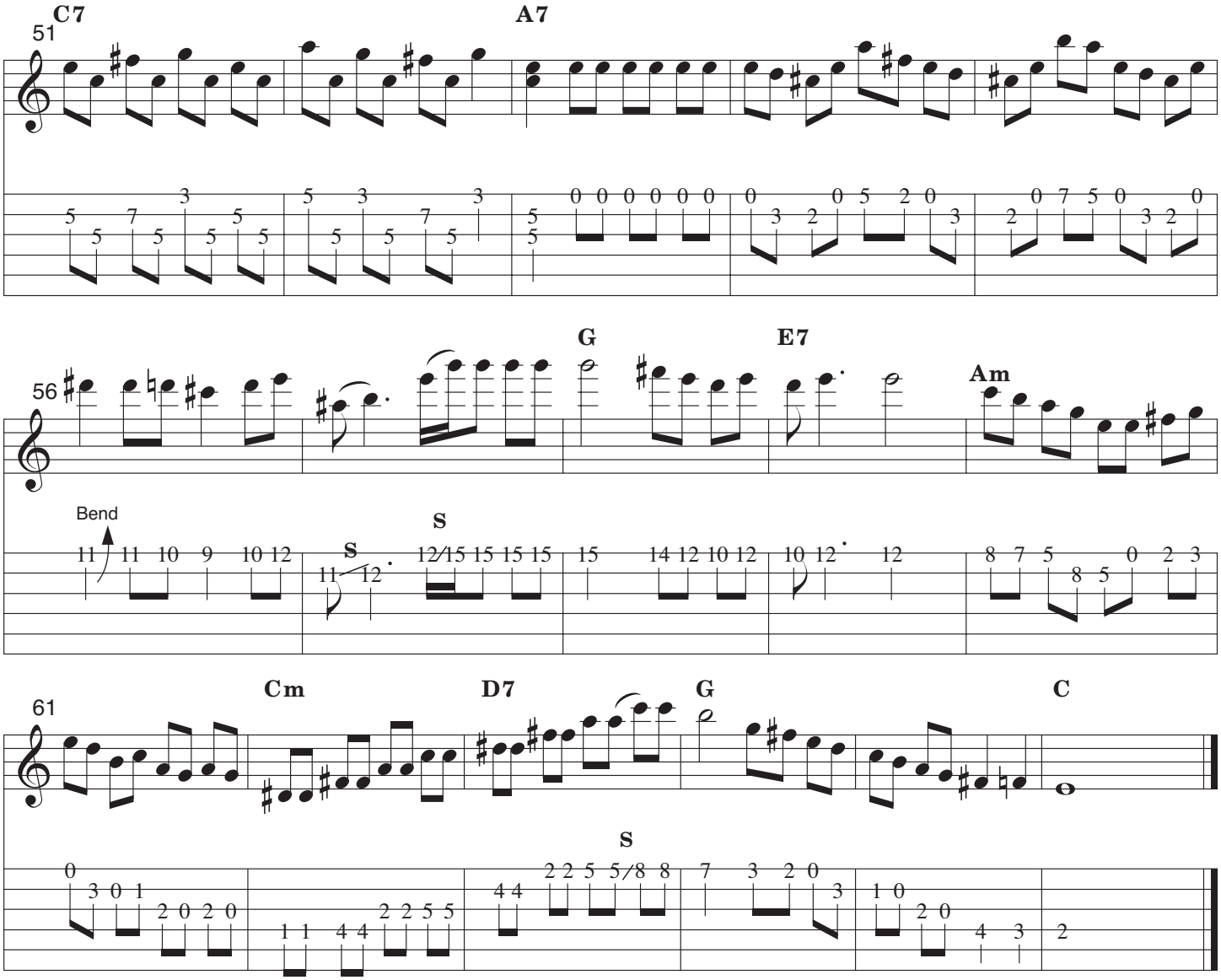
As if performing with Patty Loveless on the road and playing on some pretty high profile sessions wasn't enough, Tim has also found time to record his own solo project. Tim said, "We had been working on a Crucial Smith album when we decided to go our separate ways. There were a couple of songs I'd written that we already had 'in the can.' I thought, 'Well, that's a good start.' So I took those and added a few things here and there." The album includes the members of Crucial Smith, plus Tony Ray (banjo), Fred Carpenter (fiddle), Brian Christianson (fiddle), Al Goll (Dobro), and Todd Cook (bass). We feature one of the tunes from Tim's solo recording, "Limehouse Blues," on this issue's audio CD companion and have transcribed it on the following pages.

Look for the Tim May's solo record from FGM Records in March 2005 and watch for Tim May and Plaidgrass at your local festival. Also, watch for the Tim May, Brad Davis, and Cody Kilby live concert DVD, which will be available from FGM Records in April or May of 2005. Everywhere you turn you will be seeing Tim May this year, which is a good thing because once you hear him pick, you are going to want to hear more!

Tim's Guitars: For many years Tim May played a 1980 Martin D-35. It is the guitar he recorded all of the Crucial Smith projects with and he used it when touring with the band. On one such tour he handed the guitar to an airline employee to gate-check the instrument. He never saw the guitar again. After than guitar was lost/stolen, Tim bought a new 2001 Martin D-28. He played that guitar for a short while, and then bought a 1966 Martin D-21, which is his current guitar of choice.

Limehouse Blues

Audio CD
Track 3

Arranged by Tim May
Transcribed by Brad Davis

Limehouse Blues (con't)

Limehouse Blues (con't)

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TIM MAY
FIND MY WAY BACK

Stoney Lonesome

by Craig Vance

Here's a nifty Bill Monroe number that recently caught my ear again. I was sifting through my music collection and saw this tune pop up a couple of times. The particular version that I liked was the one on the Bluegrass Album Band's CD *Bluegrass Instrumentals* (Volume 6) (Rounder 0330).

Tony Rice's guitar break is pretty straight to the melody. Rickie Simpkins also has a great version of "Stoney Lonesome" on his *Don't Fret It* CD on Doobie Shea Records (DSCD 2006). Again, Tony does a crisp clean guitar solo. I have taken a little of Kenny Baker's version from his *Kenny Baker Plays Bill Monroe* recording (County 2708) and combined it with the version that Tony did on the BAB 6 recording.

The first half of the tune kind of conjures up images of the Wild West with cowboys and Indians. What amazed me was the likeness on the second half of the tune to the old standard "June Apple." It is almost note for note. Maybe Monroe wrote "June Apple" too! Come to think of it, you could really mess with your friends when you're playing this tune by going back and forth with the two tunes: "Stoney Apple?"

All in all, it is not a difficult tune to learn or pick, and it certainly doesn't have to be played at mach VII to sound cool. Enjoy friends!

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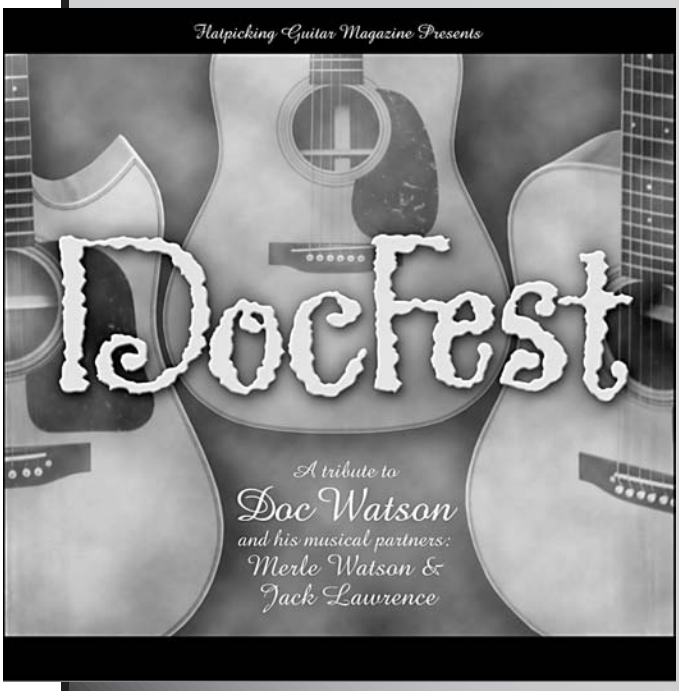

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Deep River Blues (Jim Hurst & Missy Raines)
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Train That Carried My Girl From Town (Brad Davis & Whitewater)
Way Downtown (John Tindel & RST)
Cotton Eyed Joe (David Grier)
A-Roving On A Winter's Night (Chris & Sally Jones)
The Crawdad Song (Brad Davis & Dan Miller)
Rainbow (Steve Kaufman & Roy Curry)
Little Sadie (Adam Granger)
More Pretty Girls Than One (Craig Vance & Chris Leske)
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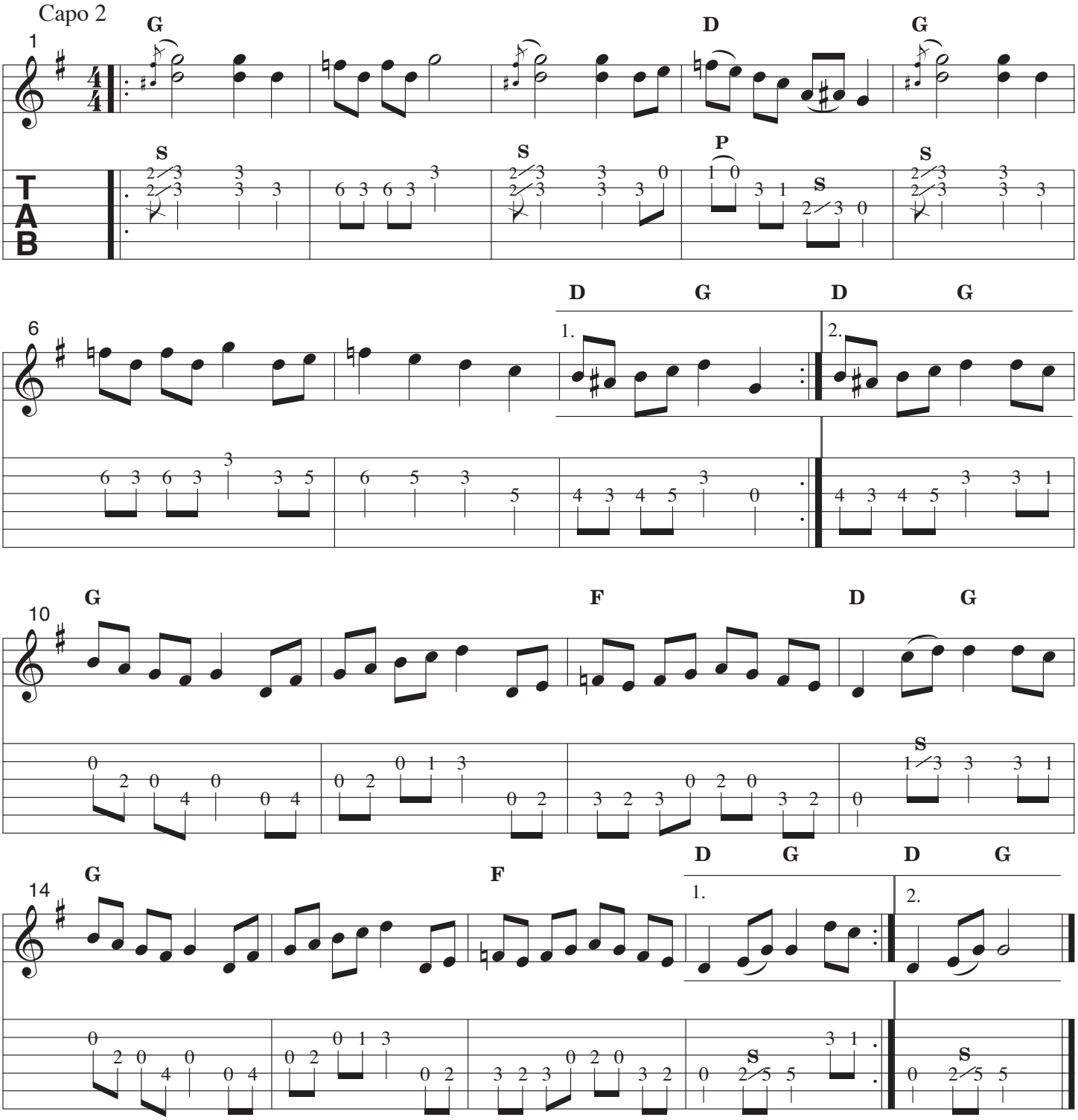
Audio CD
Tracks 5 & 6

Stoney Lonesome

Arranged by Craig Vance

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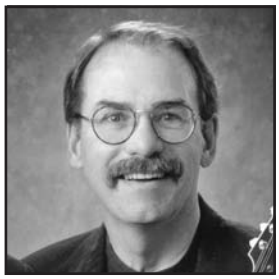

by Joe Carr

San Antonio Rose Chorus

Here is part two of our Western Swing study. The chorus of "San Antonio Rose" is in the key of 5 or, in this case, the key of A. To explain, the "A" section (verse) of the tune (as played on the fiddle) is in the key of D, so the "B" section (chorus) is in the key of A. The chorus is often played by the steel guitar. When the song modulates for the singer to the key of A, the chorus is now in the key of E. Confused? Read on.

The chorus is the "Moon in all your splendor…" part. The changes I have written in this article come largely from the 1980s Reel McCoy video production *Eldon Shamblin*. This video features Eldon slowing down eight or so of his most requested tunes and calling out the chords. At least sometimes he calls out the chord names. About 20 seconds into each section, Eldon seems to forget that he is supposed to tell the viewer what he is doing. It is left to your good ear and quick eye to figure it out. This product was available in VHS format and is now, as far as I can find out, out of print. Someone (I've forgotten who) gave me a CD copy which is very convenient to use on the computer. Perhaps someone involved will read this and re-release this great work. Or have me arrested for having a pirated copy!

As before, there are some new chord forms to learn. Since Eldon played electric guitar, the forms travel up the neck a little higher than I generally like to go, especially since I play a 12-fret! Notice the end of this section leads back to the A section in the key of D. The song follows an AABA form, or verse, verse, chorus, verse, if you prefer to think of it like that. Work on these new shapes and try to work them into other songs. Play each chord frame for two beats. Play the bass note on the first beat and the remaining notes on beat two. All open strings should be muted with the left hand fingers. Write FGM with questions or problems and I'll address them in future columns.

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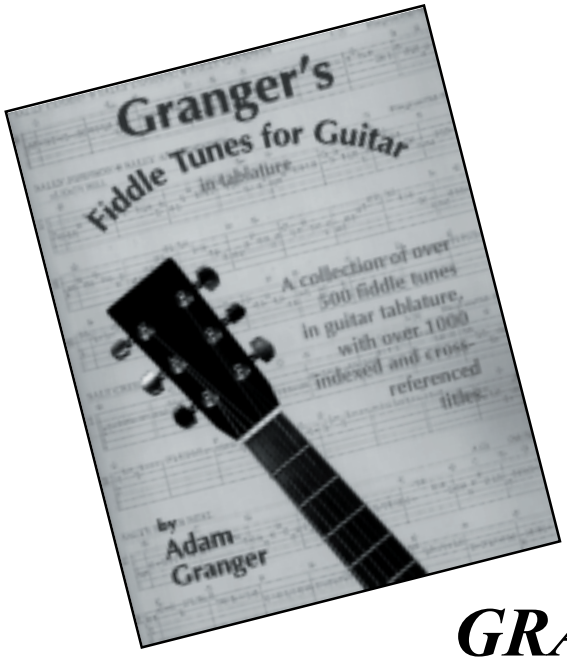
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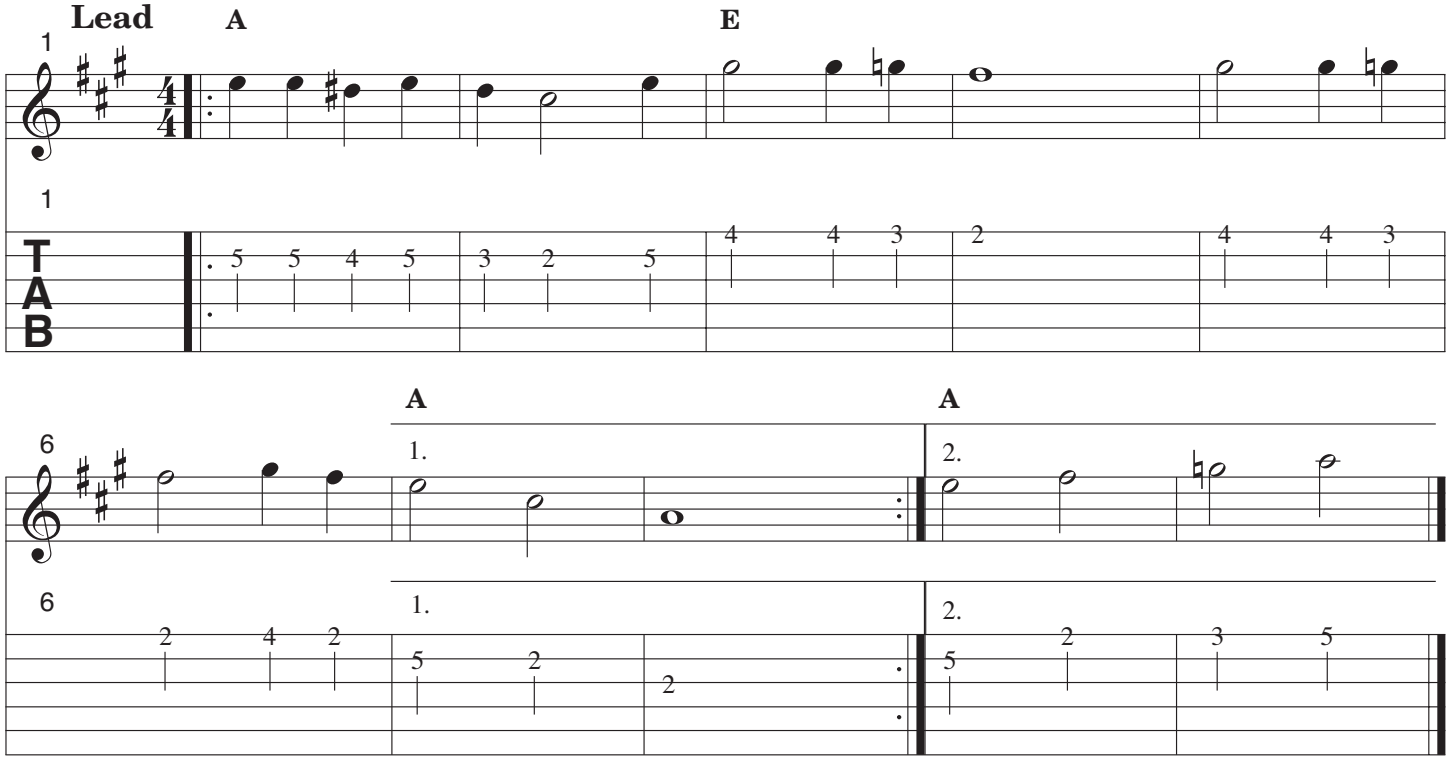
Audio CD
Track 7

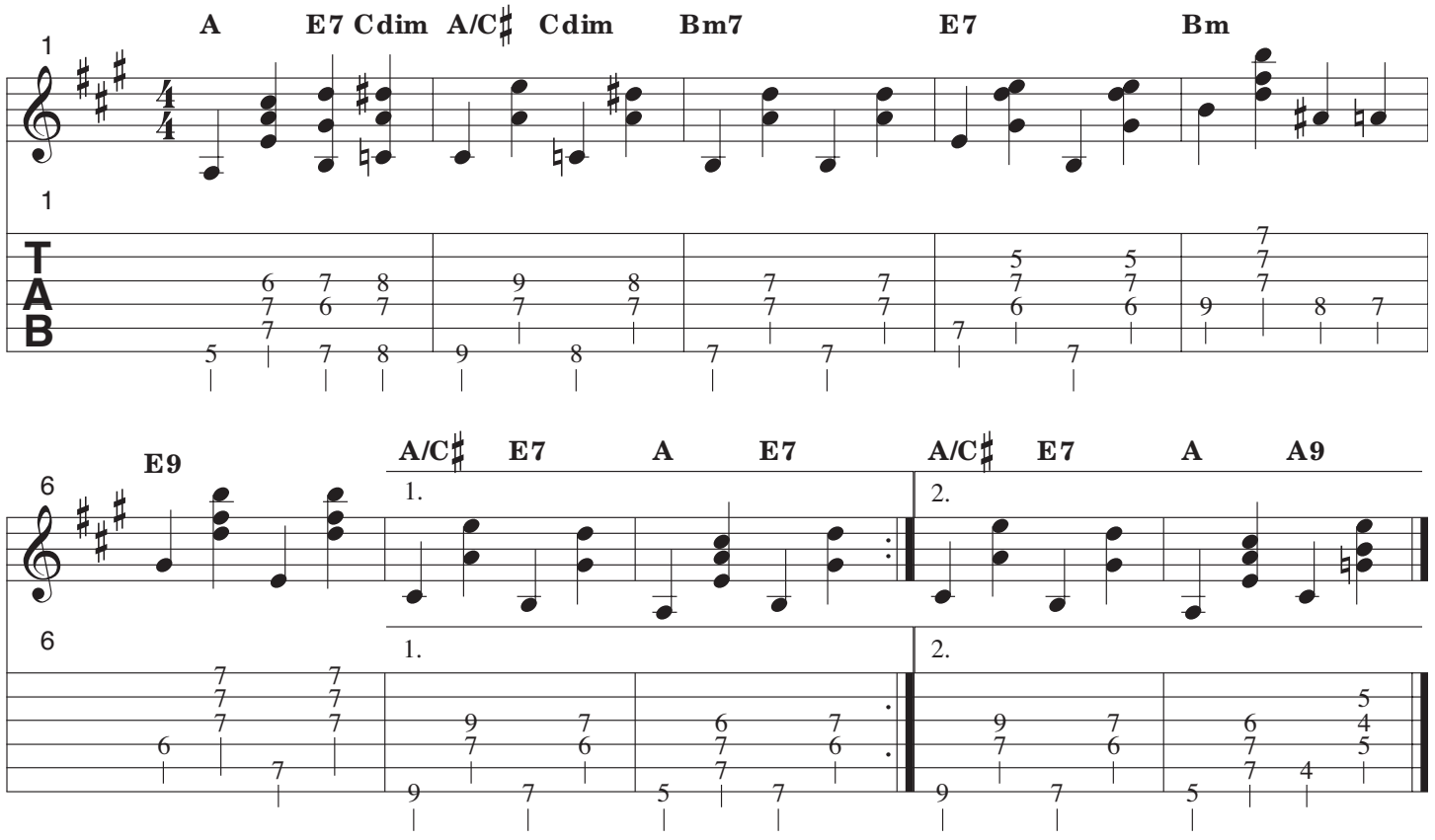
San Antonio Rose

chorus lead and rhythm

Arranged by Joe Carr

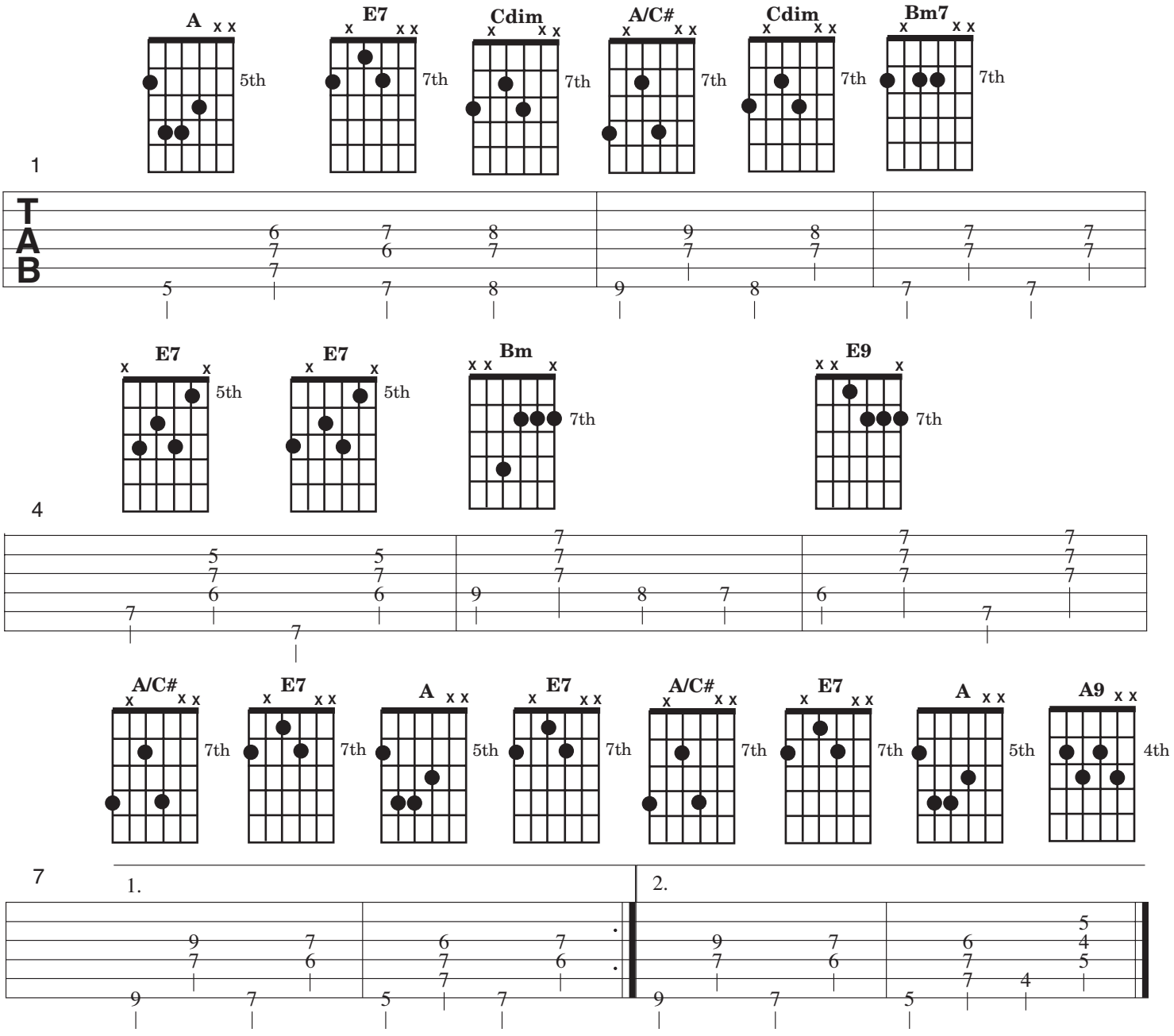


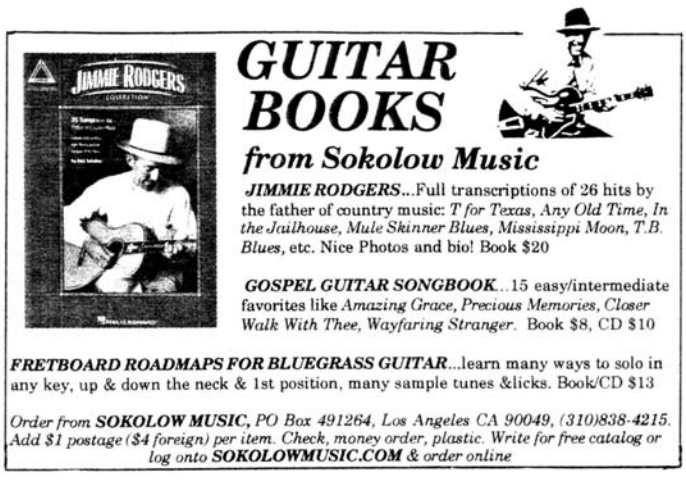
Rhythm



San Antonio Rose

rhythm tab with chord diagrams

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Beginner's Page

by Dan Huckabee

The Formula of Music

I always emphasize the commonality of songs in every lesson I teach, because there are way too many songs in the world for anyone to learn them all. That's the bad news. The good news is that there are only 12 notes in music, so all these millions of songs must have a lot in common. So if we accept that we can't learn every song, (and people are writing new ones every day), then we would probably be wise to spend a little time learning about the "Formula of Music."

I know you've been in overwhelming situations where the songs were unfamiliar, the tempos were very fast, and just when you start catching on to one song, it's over and they've started a new one. This situation can be very discouraging, and I want to remedy it for you.

For the sake of sanity, let's divide the whole mess into two parts: notes and chords. The melody comes from a finite sack of only 12 notes! The chords usually come from an even smaller sack. OK, this narrows it down to something manageable. Yes, you can get this. Yes, you can enjoy music and actively participate without having to stop your whole life to go to college for 4 years.

In this issue we are going to do an exercise. We are going to play the plain and simple melody of two bluegrass standards. Both melodies will be played in open position in two keys.

The lesson is to play these melodies, but your homework assignment is to play 15 more melodies of your choosing. This means that you will have to hunt and peck for these melodies. You have to figure out where the melody notes fall in the open position on your guitar. The only hint you'll get from me is that you will find every note you need without going past the 4th fret of your guitar. Remember, there are only 12 notes in all of music, and there are 30 notes on the guitar if you don't go past the 4th fret. In other words, every note in the whole world (C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, and B) are all represented within the first four frets of the guitar, and some of these notes are available in "low, medium, and high" within the first four frets.

After you've finished your homework assignment of 15 songs, you will discover that you are starting to gain a mastery of where melodies fall in open position (which is where bluegrass is mostly played). Keep in mind that although simple melodies are not flashy and sound like children's music, they are still the foundation for flatpicking guitar mastery. In other words, the guy who learns the most simple melodies is the guy who will be the most active in jam sessions. If you have any questions, give me a call (toll free) at 800-543-6125.

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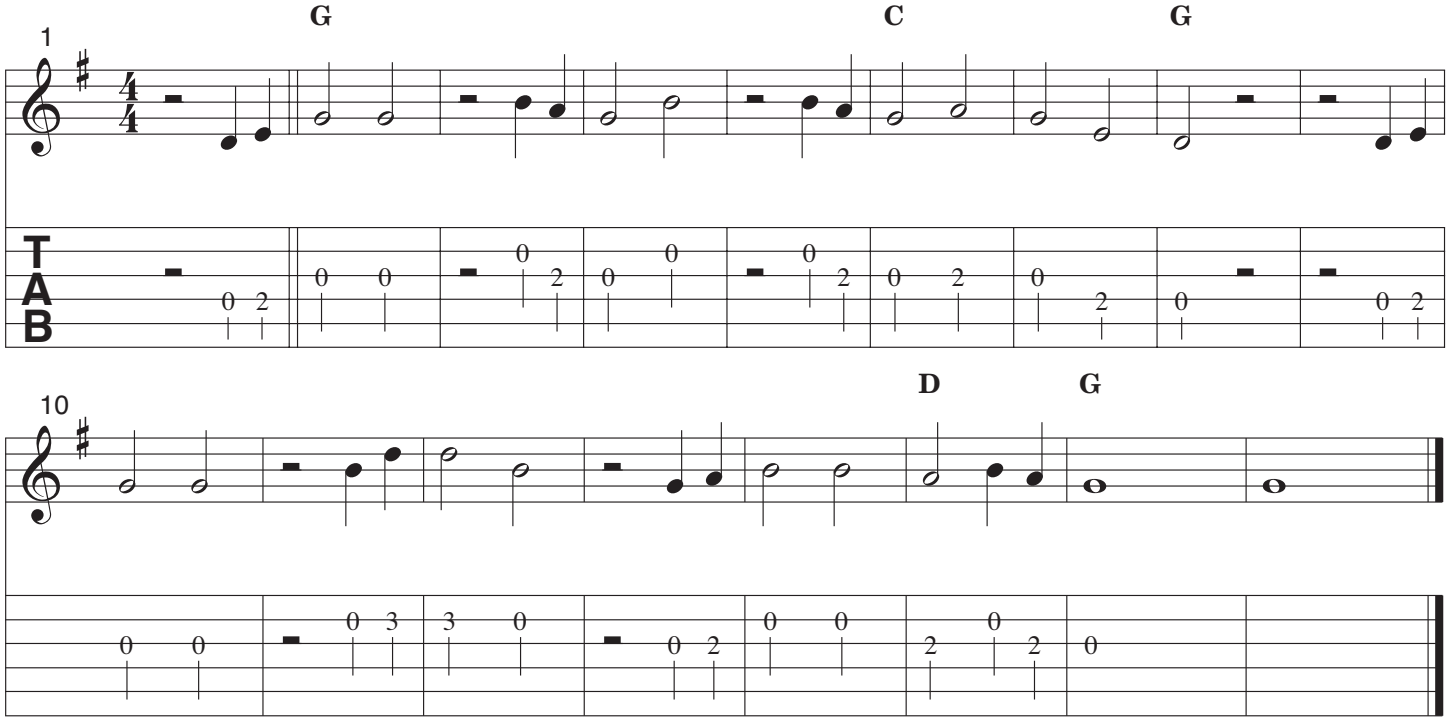
Audio CD
Track 8-9

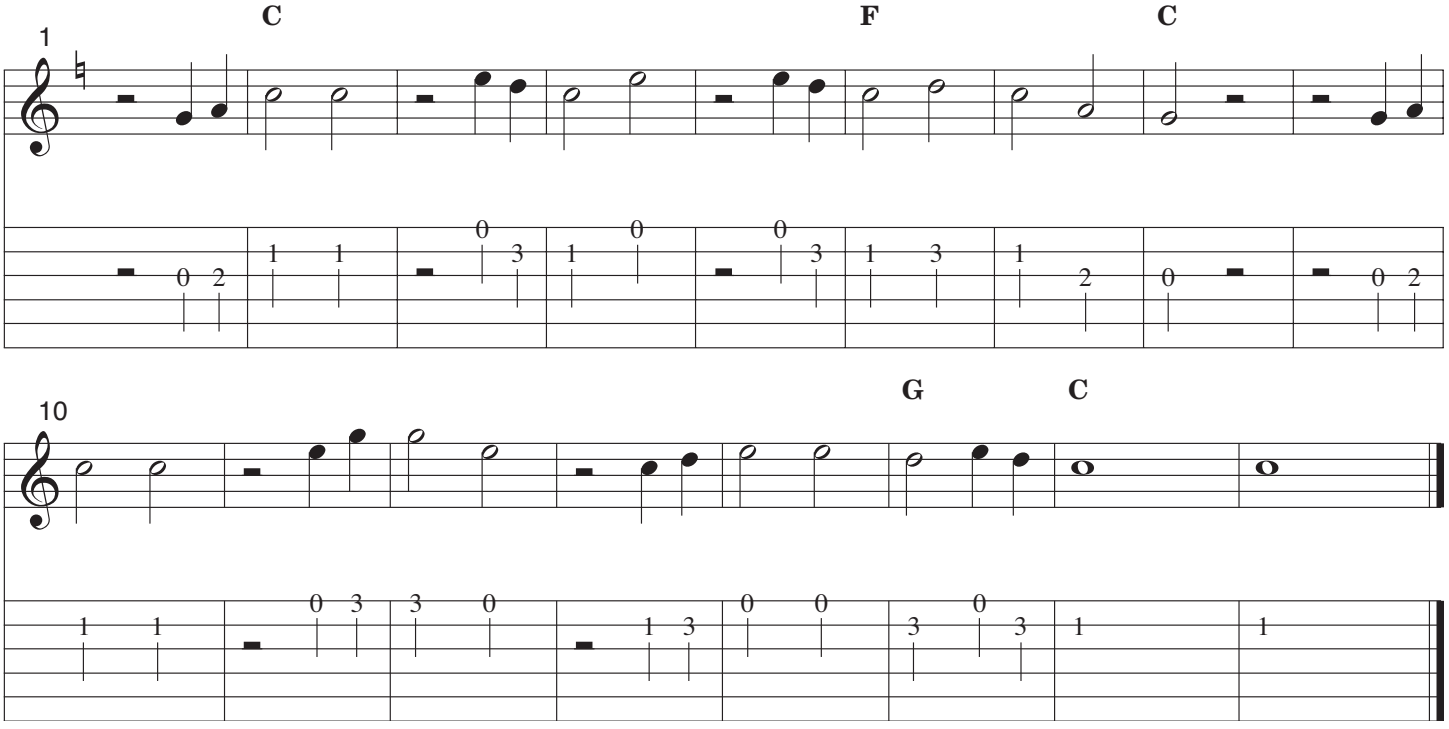
Will The Circle Be Unbroken

Arranged by Dan Huckabee

Key of G



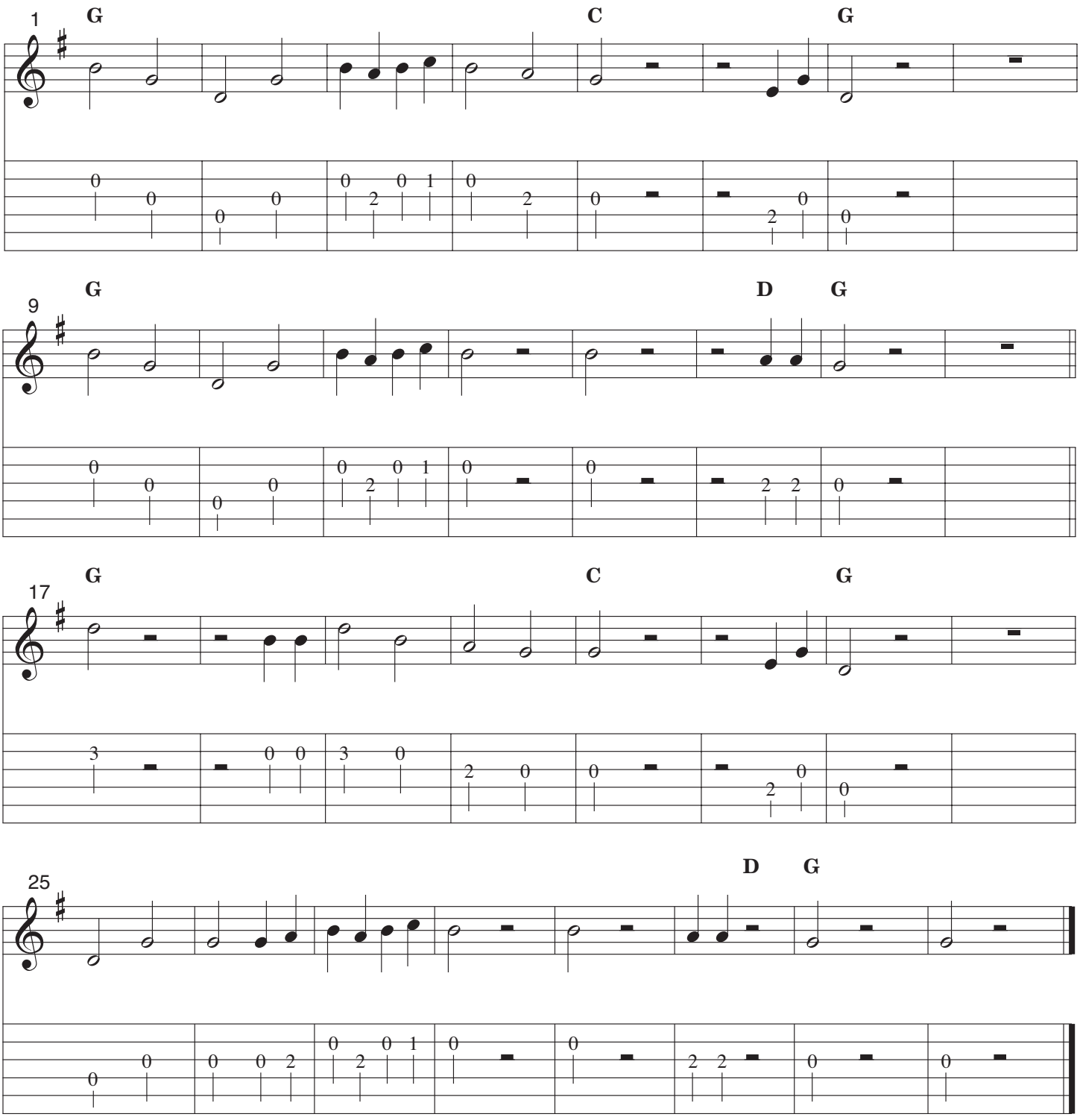
Key of C

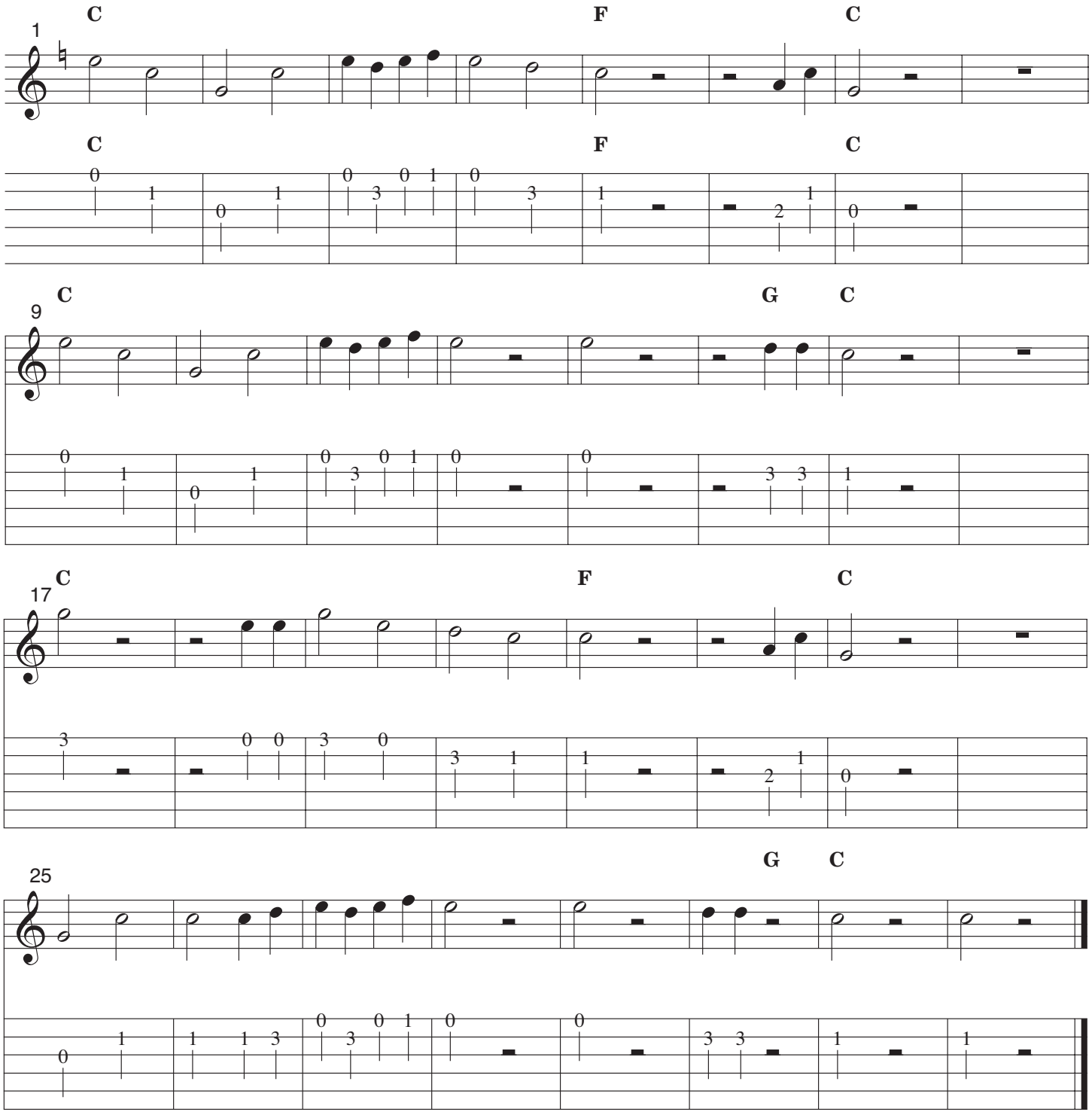


Audio CD
Track 10-11

I'll Fly Away

Arranged by Dan Huckabee

Key of G

I'll Fly Away (con't)

Key of C

Guitar Maintenance and Repair

by Frank Ford

Making a New Pickguard

This piece is the logical companion to last issue's article on pickguard replacement. Here we'll be making a new pickguard from a sheet of tortoise-colored celluloid and adding the adhesive to allow it to be installed on top of the finish.

Celluloid is the traditional material for flat top guitar pickguards as developed by Martin and others in the 1920s. Contrary to popular opinion, no American manufacturer of steel string guitars has ever used a genuine tortoise shell pickguard as standard equipment. Even Martin and Gibson used tortoise pattern celluloid for all their inlaid mandolin pickguards from the very beginning around 1900.

It has been a long while since celluloid has been made in this country. Currently, our supply of celluloid comes from Japan and the one remaining Western plant in Italy. It is manufactured in standard-size sheets, about twenty by fifty inches, and in wide variety of thicknesses and colors. Most of us in the guitar business use either the tortoise shell color or black for our pickguards.

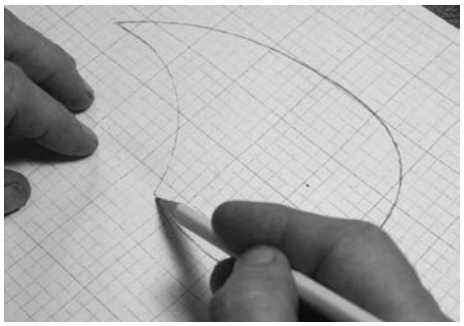
There are a number of makers of different synthetic tortoise pattern pickguards, some of which emulate the "real thing" much better than the celluloid, but since real tortoise was never a part of the vintage guitar scene, I prefer the stuff that looks like fake tortoise celluloid. It's a funny business.

So, here's how you can go about making a fine pickguard from a sheet of celluloid. You don't need to buy the whole big sheet. You can simply order a small section from Stewart MacDonald, L.M.I., or any number of luthier supply sources. The ideal thickness runs from about 0.020" to 0.030".

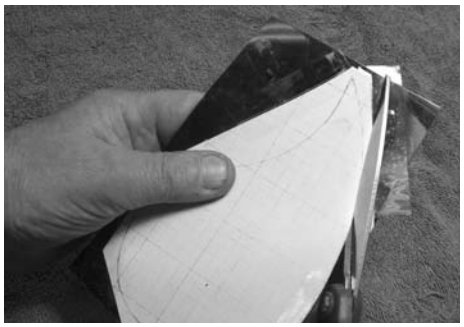
The basic "tool kit" for this project is very modest indeed: Scissors, a sharp knife, some 150-grit sandpaper, 600-grit waterproof sandpaper, a single edge razor blade and a classic pencil eraser. That's the easy stuff. The not-so-easy stuff includes sheets of very fine grit waterproof sanding paper. You'll want 1200- and 2500-grit

abrasive, and you may have to go to an automotive paint supply shop to find the finest stuff. Oh, yes, and a bowl of soapy water and some nice polish.

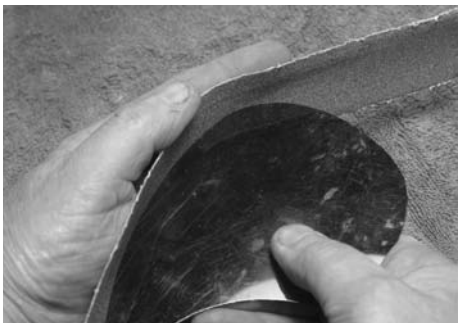
Clearly, the first step is to decide on a design and draw or trace it on a piece of paper:



With the paper securely taped on the celluloid, it's a fairly simple matter to use sharp scissors to cut the pickguard out carefully right to the line on the paper:



Now, of course you can't cut the piece without some rough spots or uneven curves, so you'll want to take some sandpaper (about 150-grit) and curve it in your hand and sand the edge lengthwise to smooth out the outside curves:

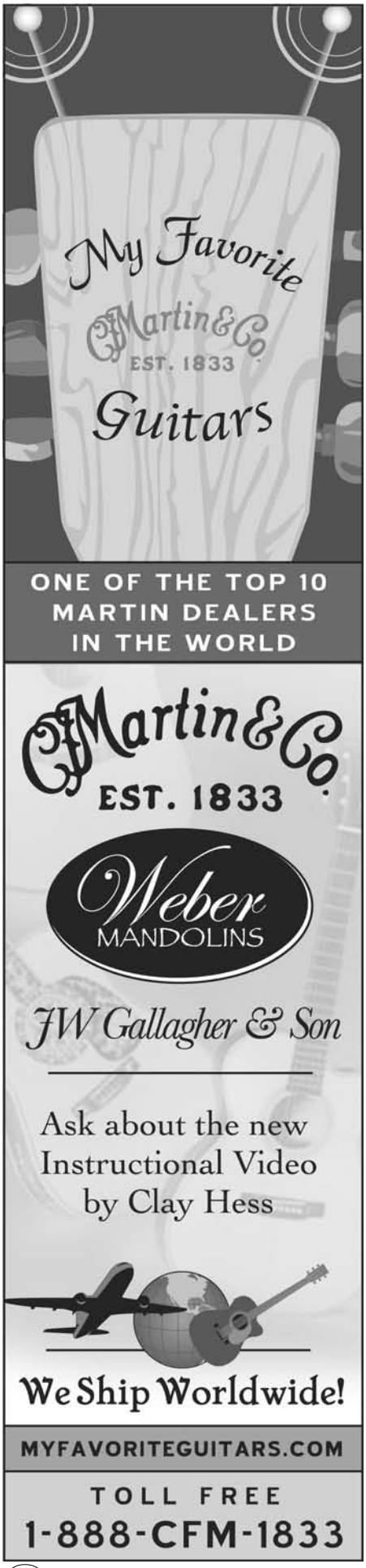


Look around the house for something round, like a fat bottle or can, and use it to curve the sandpaper as you sand the inside curve that will match up with the soundhole rings. It doesn't have to fit the curve perfectly, but the closer the better.

Here I've found a roll of masking tape that's somewhat smaller in diameter than the curve I want to match, so I'm working the pickguard at a bit of an angle to approximate the curve a little better:

Once the pickguard is cut to shape, trace it on a piece of stiff cardboard, and cut the cardboard out to the same shape so you'll have a solid little work board for the next operation:

Here's where things get a bit tricky. The idea is to create a bevel at the edge by

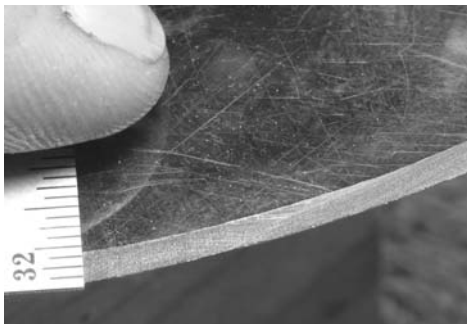


scraping with a sharp knife blade. You might want to practice scraping such a bevel on some of the scrap pieces you have left over before you attack the real thing.

Holding a sharp knife blade vertical in relation to the plane of the celluloid and at an angle that will create a fairly wide bevel, scrape firmly but gently side-to-side:

The cardboard will help keep the celluloid flat as you go, but you'll need to keep your fingers under the working area for extra support.

After a little while, and with some care, you can create a bevel that is about 3/32" wide, running all along the edge of the pickguard:



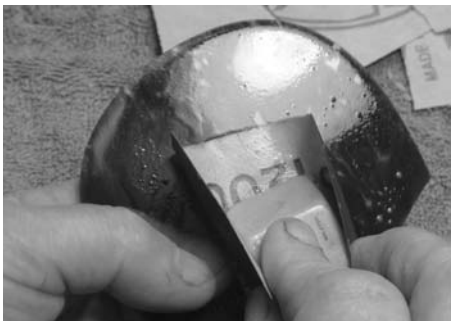
Try to make the bevel almost, but not quite, all the way to the bottom edge of the pickguard. This will not only make the guard look more like it "flows" into the finish of the guitar, but the flexible edge will greatly improve the chances that the pickguard will resist the tendency to curl at the edges as it ages.

Once you're satisfied you have the bevel just about as even as you can get it all around, it's time to round it over toward the top surface and start to polish the pickguard. A bowl of soapy water makes the ideal lubricant and cleaning medium for working with celluloid and waterproof sanding paper. The water flushes away the small abrasive particles so you don't scratch the delicate plastic any more than necessary with the sandpaper, and it also keeps the sandpaper from "loading" with celluloid bits.

Using the soft pencil eraser ("Pink Pearl" is my favorite) as a sanding block, sand with 600-grit waterproof paper all around the edges, up and over toward the center. Using a circular motion as you sand is the most efficient way to level and keep things even:

As you go, remember there's no need to sand all the way into the center. You're just evening out the scraping marks on the bevel, and rounding the bevel over toward the top:

Break out the 1200-grit paper and spend some time going over the same areas you just did with the 600-grit, this time going up and over into the center of the pickguard:



The goal is to remove all the coarser sanding scratches left by that 600-grit paper, so, you'll want to dry off the pickguard from time to time to check your progress. A general rule of thumb is that when you think you've sanded through all the 600-grit scratches, you're about half done, so go over it again.

At this point you should have a dull looking pickguard with gently sloping rounded edges:

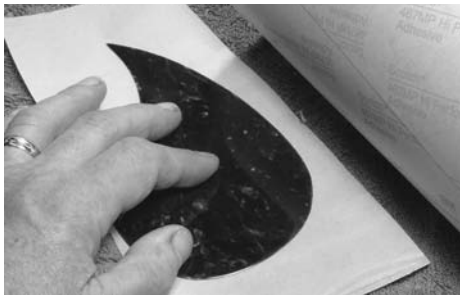
Repeat the above procedure using the 2500-grit sandpaper.

It may seem like an unnecessary step to sand with paper this fine, but it saves so much time in hand polishing, it's more than worth the effort!

While a professional luthier in a well equipped shop would be able to skip from the 600-grit right to a power buffing rig, you can get equally fine results using a variety of polishes. Meguiar's, Novus, and a host of instrument polishes will all do a good job, with varying amounts of "elbow grease" depending on their abrasive content. My favorite is 3M "Perfect-It" which is available from Stewart MacDonald, L.M.I., or any number of automotive parts and paint shops.

Scrub like crazy with this polish, and you can transform that dull 2500-grit sanding job into a mirror gloss!

Once you're happy with the polish job, lay the pickguard down onto the sheet of roll adhesive. It looks like double sided tape, but in fact it's just the sticky adhesive with a backing.



Make sure to really rub the tape hard from the back side to get it to stick well to the pickguard. Otherwise, the adhesive may tend to pull off as you remove the backing when you're at the point of installing the pickguard.

Once the adhesive is well stuck on there, take that new razor blade and carefully slice off the backing sheet and exposed adhesive.

All done! Now you have a fine beveled and polished pickguard, ready for installation.

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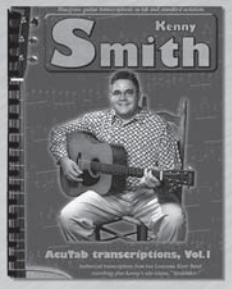

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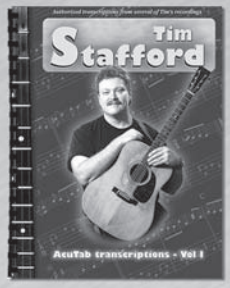

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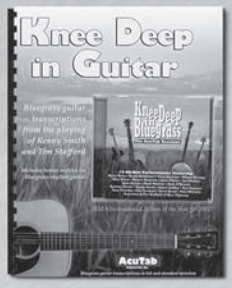

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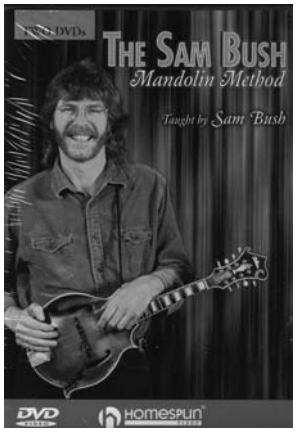

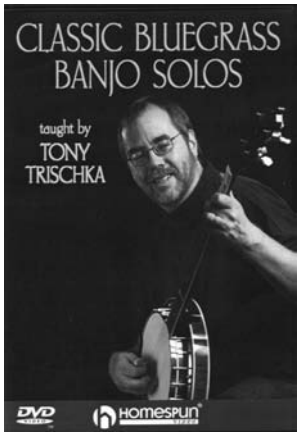

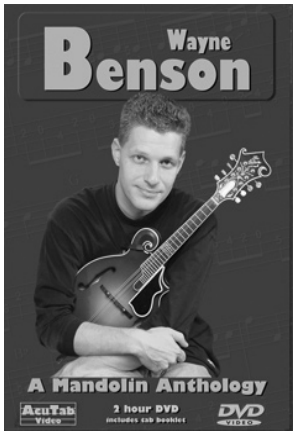

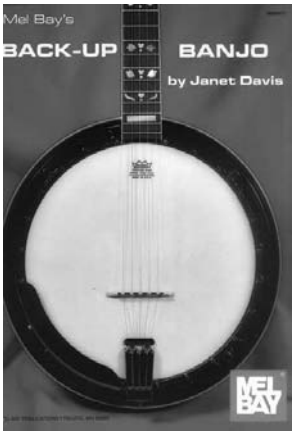

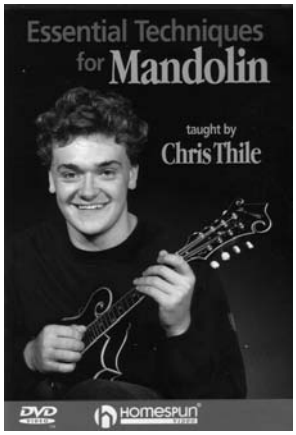

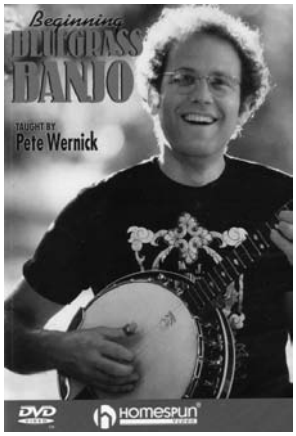

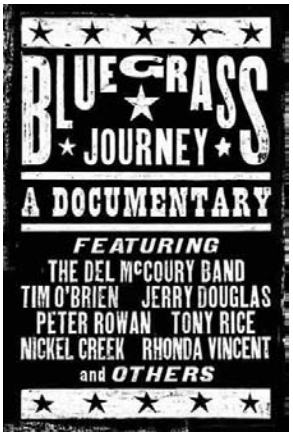

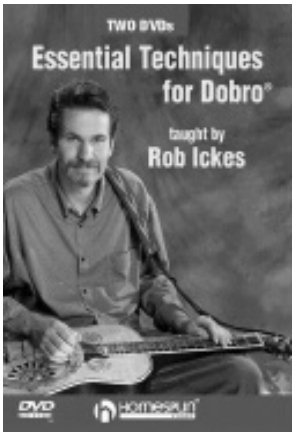

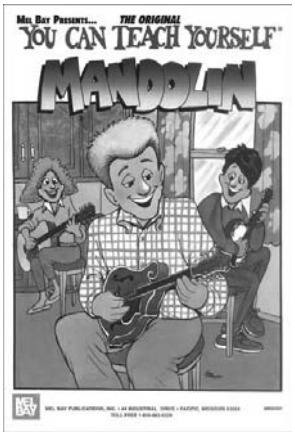

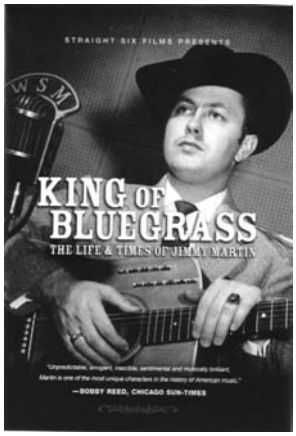

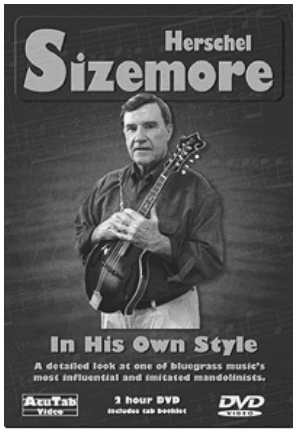

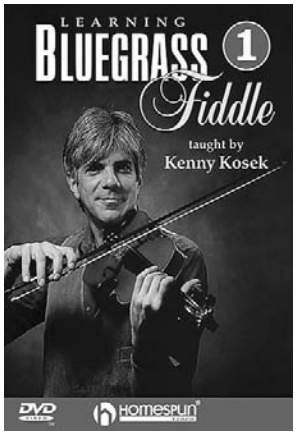

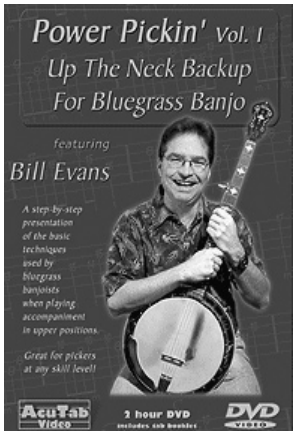

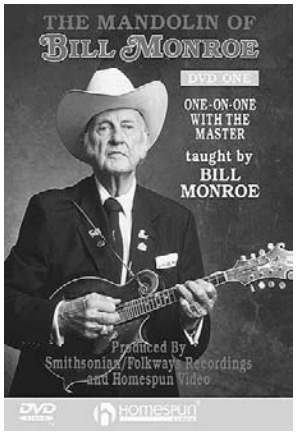

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Kaufman's Corner

by Steve Kaufman

Hi friends! Welcome back to my corner of the flatpicking world. A few years back I wrote a book for Mel Bay Publications called *Kaufman's Encyclopedia of Traditional Celtic Fiddle Tunes for Guitar*. There is also a mandolin version of the same book as well. The book was a large and heavy book so it is being broken into four separate books to be titled *Kaufman's Favorite Fifty Hornpipes, Kaufman's Favorite Fifty Reels, Kaufman's Favorite Fifty Waltzes*, and *Kaufman's Favorite Fifty Jigs*. Anyway, I was recording the CDs that accompany the books and was reacquainted with this gem of a tune. It's loads of fun to play and sounds like a real winner.

It is in the key of D so that tells me I should play it out of 2nd position. I have marked the fingerings to use in the piece to get you going on the right track.

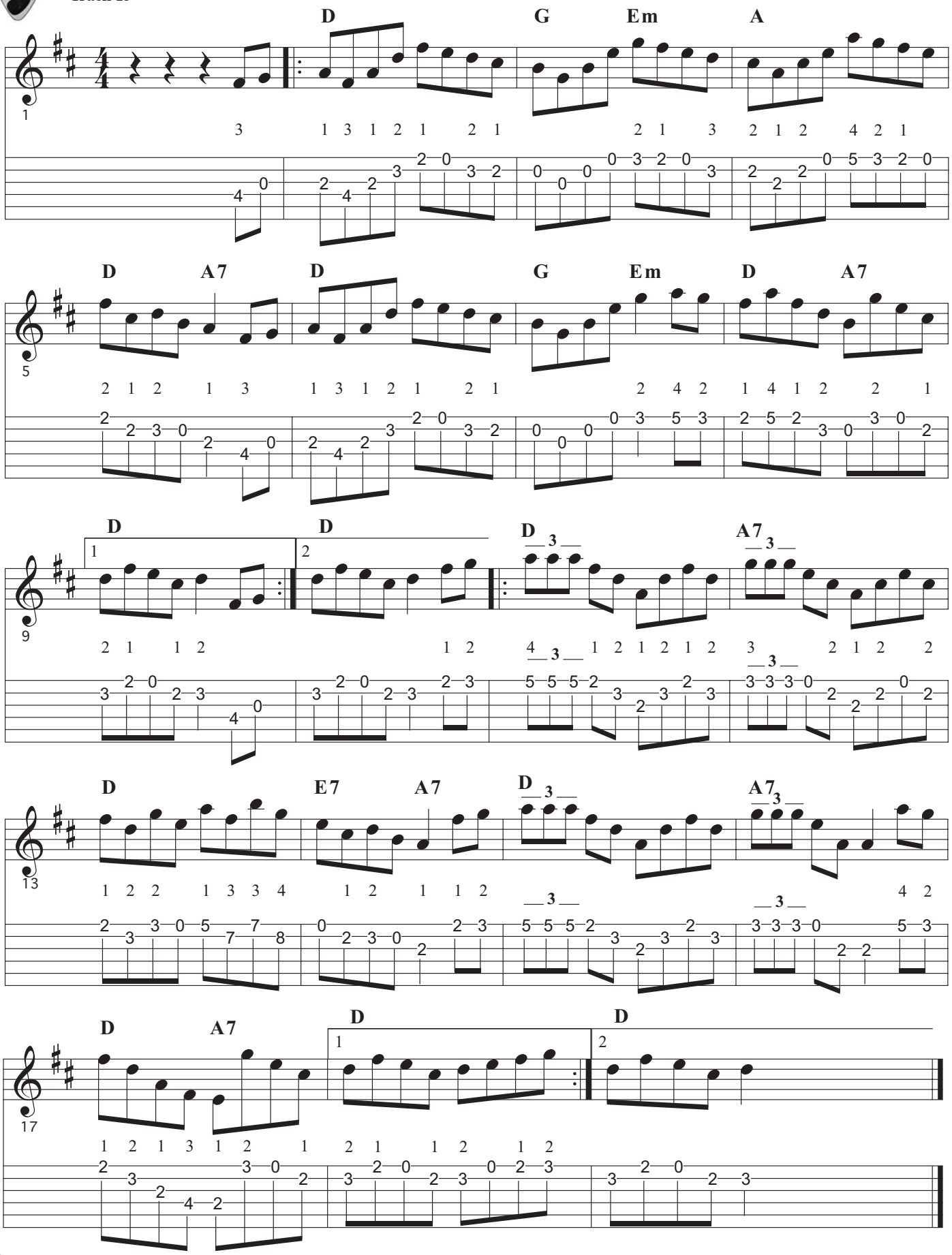
The B section begins at measure 11 where you find triplets. Now most of you have heard me preach the Golden Rule of down-ups in the right hand: down on the down beats and up on the up beats. Makes sense to me. The "+" beats are hit with up swings—case closed. Until you get to triplets. They throw all the rules away. I can tell you how I handle these measures but you may find another way. I've marked the first set of triplets for you: Down-Up-Down-Up-Up then the down-ups as normal. Play each measure beginning with the triplet this way. It is easier to play the triplets D-U-D-U-U than to try to work the right hand back earlier on the down-ups.

Play around with it and see how it treats you. Either way it's a fun song and remember that hornpipes are not all that fast. Take your time and have fun with it.

Bye for now and see you in June at Kamp!

Audio CD
Track 13

Elk's Festival Hornpipe

Arranged by Steve Kaufman

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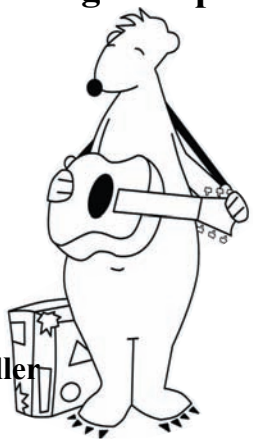

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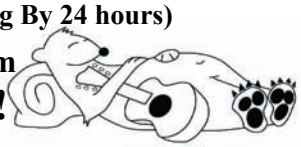

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Adventures in Acoustic Music: Magic Changes

by John Carlini

What if I told you that you could play rhythm on practically any swing tune by using five easy 3-note chord forms? Really. I'm tellin' ya. You can!

Here are the five forms (see diagrams below). Please memorize them. But before you do, I'd like to focus on a few things.

Notice that the fourth finger is fretting the 3rd string on all these chord forms except for #2. When you can train that finger to be a pivot point on which the rest of the chord "forms," you'll be ready to swing your way through tune after tune.

In order to define the quality of a chord, you really only need a few notes—a root, a 3rd, and a 6th or 7th—most of the time. Hey, sometimes you don't even need a root! Look at #4, Cmin7. No "C"!

So, here's the deal. This is where it can get confusing. Sure, I've labeled these chords, but, actually the name of the chord depends on its usage within a given progression. Chord #1 I've called G6. But that's if G happens to be the root. But what if E were the root? Then it would be E minor. Why? Because G would then be the flatted 3rd and B the 5th.

Look at #3, Gmin6. Just for now, add your index finger to the 2nd string 1st fret, C. Now what does it look like? Yup. Good ol' C7! So, that Gmin6 "could" be functioning as a C7 with G, the fifth, in the bass. That chord could also be functioning as a diminished. I know. I know. It's crazy. But that's just the way it works. In music, "things are not always as they seem"!

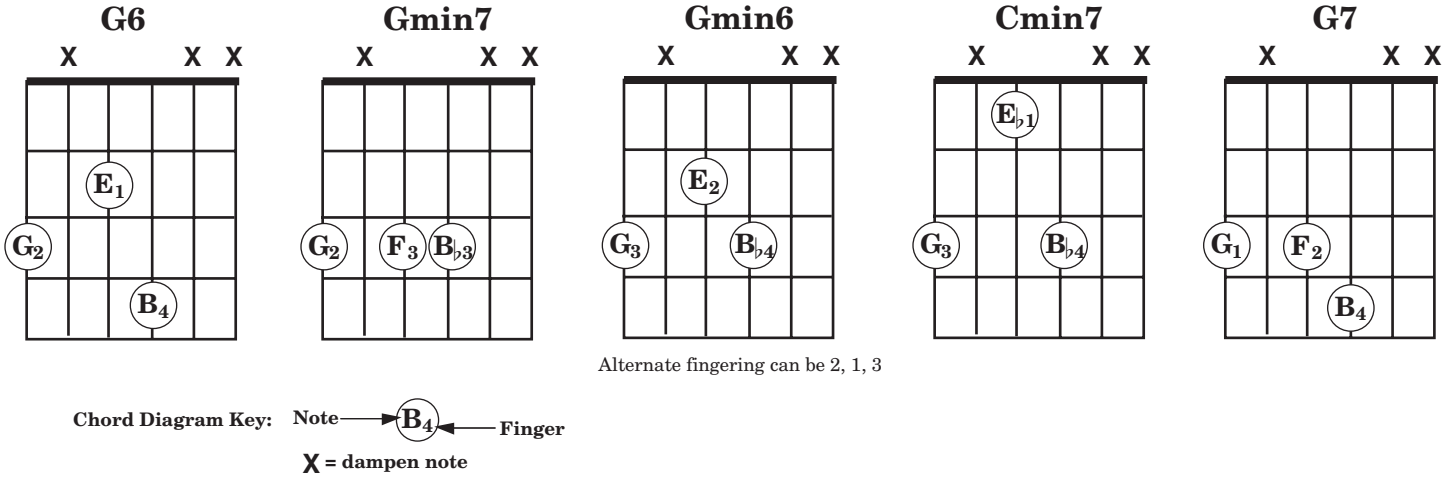
But it's not my intention to bog you down with a bunch of theory here. It's to get you into playing swing rhythm. On the next page you'll find a typical chord progression that I think you can have some fun with.

I have labeled the chords by name on top of the staff. Under each chord I've indicated a number (#) to correspond with one of the five chord forms, followed by a fret number which indicates the 6th string fret as the lowest tone of the chord. So in measure 3, for instance, (G/B), you would play chord #4 with your third finger on the 7th fret, 6th string, followed by chord #3 (Bbdim) with your third finger on the 6th fret, 6th string.

Chord #3 also has an alternate fingering. Feel free to experiment with different fingers. The idea is for the chords to flow smoothly in succession with a minimum of effort.

Have a swingin' New Year!

Please visit John's web site (www.johncarlini.com) for the latest performance and teaching info and acoustic music news. Check out the CD by the John Carlini Quartet, The Game's Afoot!*, featuring Don Stiernberg, Brian Glassman, and Steve Holloway, w/special guest, Pat Cloud at www.fgmrecords.com. John and mandolinist, Don Stiernberg, also record for Blue Night Records. Please visit www.bluenightrecords.com for more info.*



Alternate fingering can be 2, 1, 3

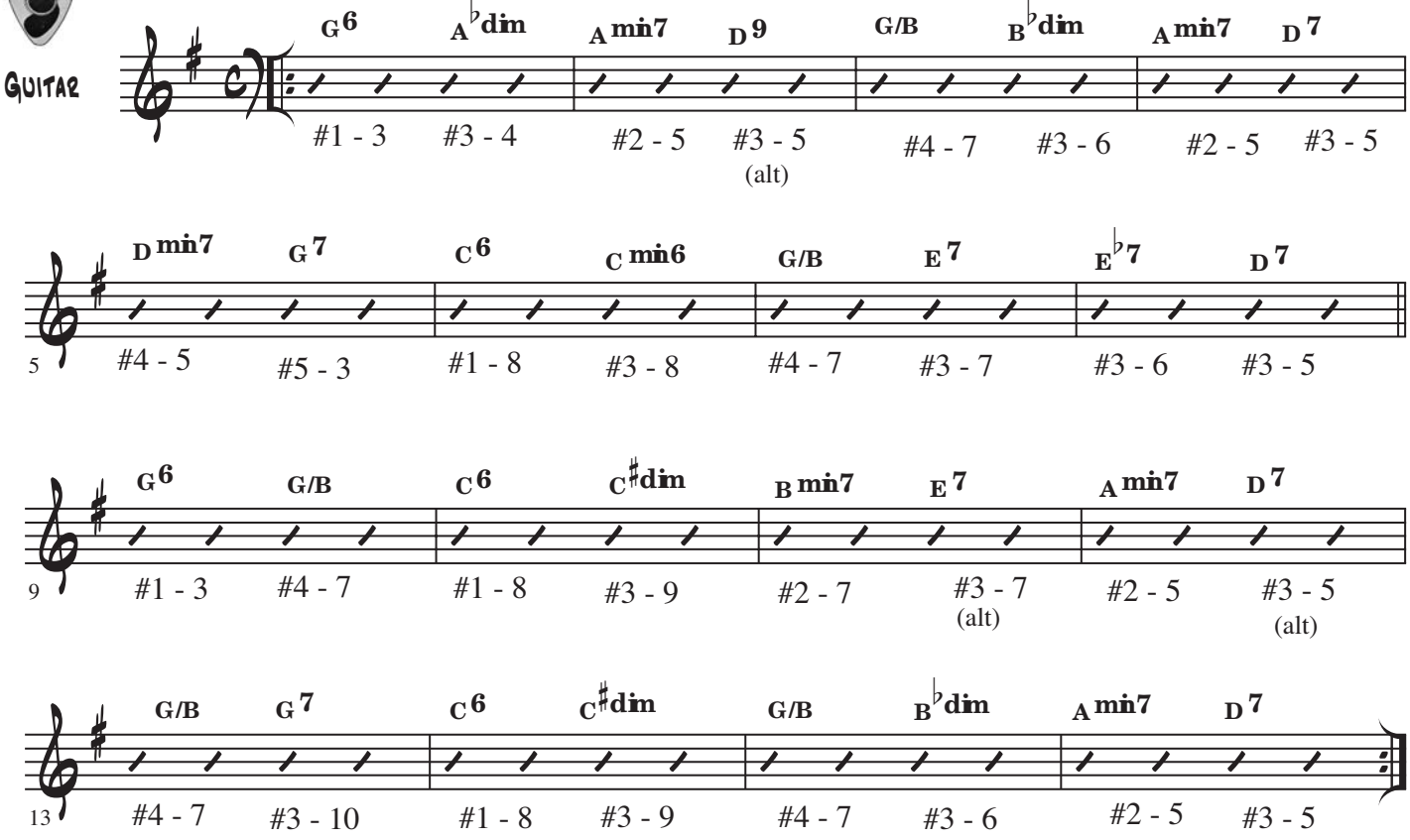
Chord Diagram Key: Note → B_4 ← Finger

X = dampen note

Audio CD
Track 14

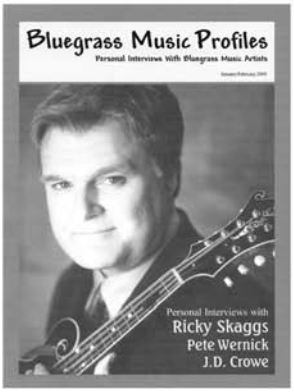
GUITAR

Magic Swing Chords



BLUEGRASS MUSIC PROFILES

Gettin' personal with bluegrass artists!



Bluegrass artists we've gotten personal with include Bobby Osborne, Jimmy Martin, Dale Ann Bradley, IIIrd Tyme Out, J.D. Crowe, Lonesome River Band, Josh Graves, Ralph Stanley, Doyle Lawson, Larry Sparks, Tim Graves, Dave Evans, Mac Wiseman, Mountain Heart, Charlie Waller, Wildfire, Kenny Baker and many more!

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Randy Kohrs is featured in BMP's Jan/Feb issue!

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by Dan Miller

Saga Owner Richard Keldsen with a Blueridge BR-260

During the past nine years *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* has featured articles on nearly 50 of the top acoustic steel-string guitar builders in the world. The majority of those builders (many of whom who build by hand) produce instruments that are at the high end of the price range and rightly so. However, we have received feedback from some of our readers who would like to purchase a fine instrument, yet do not have several thousand dollars to spend on one. They have asked that we report on companies who are providing quality instruments that are within their price range. This has been quite a dilemma for beginning guitar players and guitar hobbyists who do not have much disposable income. However, there are options out there. For instance, take a look at Saga Musical Instruments and their Blueridge and Gitane lines of acoustic guitars.

Saga has been in business for nearly 30 years and in that time has certainly met owner Richard Keldsen's original mission: to provide quality musical instruments at affordable prices. However, several years ago, based on the experience of his staff, his own lessons learned after 25 years of dealing with Asian factories, the lessons learned by factory managers overseas, and the opening of China's doors to foreign investment, Richard has been able to successfully modify that mission statement to add the word "high" in front of "quality." In the last several years Saga has been able to provide players with an increasingly higher quality product and do so at very reasonable prices. If you have not played a Saga instrument lately, you need to go to your local dealer and give one a try. You will be pleasantly surprised with both the quality and the price tag.

The common comment I've heard from anyone—from store owners, to instrument builders, to guitar players—who has picked up a new Saga guitar, whether it be a Blueridge or a Gitane, has been "I don't know how they can make a guitar that is so good and offer it for such a low price!" To understand how this can be done, you have to understand something of the history of instrument manufacturing in Asia. And then you have to know something about Richard Keldsen and his staff at Saga.

The words "Made in Japan," "Made in China," "Made in Taiwan," or "Made in Korea" stamped on a musical instrument have historically been equated with the word "cheap." And in many instances, this was indeed the case. Instruments made overseas, shipped through brokers in the United States, and sold through large music store chains as student models are in many cases low quality "cookie-cutter" instruments. This is not always a bad thing, because these instruments have served a purpose. Many great musicians started out learning on these instruments because they either couldn't afford something else or didn't want to invest a lot of money before they knew whether or not they were going to stick with the instrument. The biggest down side is that some of these instruments are virtually unplayable due to poor design and/or poor set-up. If you are trying to learn on an instrument with high action that will not stay in tune, it can be very frustrating.

Saga instruments have always been higher in quality than the "cheap" Asian imports due, in large part, to the fact that Richard Keldsen is a player himself. Richard explains, "In America most of the factories that are building high quality instruments started with an owner who was a player. They started out with the owner having a connection to the instrument. Most factories in Asia are not owned or operated by players. They are not connected with what makes one instrument different from another. It is the small details that make one instrument better than the other and they don't understand those details. The wholesale companies who are importing these instruments don't know much about them either. So this is another link in the chain of ignorance. What we have done at Saga is to view our position as a bridge between the players and the people at the factories because we are players ourselves."

When asked about his background as a player, Richard said, "If it wasn't for Earl Scruggs, I don't know what I would be doing now!" A native of Northern Michigan, Richard used to tune into the local country

station to try and catch a few songs by his favorite singer, Johnny Cash. One day a song came on the program that caught Richard's ear. "I'd never heard anything like it." Richard found out that the song was called "Ground Speed" and the artist was Earl Scruggs. He called the station and asked for more of Earl. The DJ started playing two or three Earl Scruggs cuts everyday and Richard was hooked. He said, "I was the only person I knew in Michigan who liked this music. I started slipping Flatt & Scruggs records in at parties." Naturally, learning how to play the banjo followed.

By 1973 Richard had moved out to San Francisco and was the owner of a retail music store there called The Fifth String. He felt like it would be a good idea to see if he could put together a banjo kit and offer it for sale through the store. He solicited prices for banjo parts from manufactures in the United States, but found that going this route was going to make the kit too expensive. His next idea was to go to Japan and see what they could do for him. After some meetings with a Japanese contact and discussions about special tooling requirements, they came up with a banjo kit that was affordable and met Richard's quality demands. The year the kit became available he took some of them to the NAMM show and marketed them under his store's name. He had some success. But Richard knew that if he wanted the kit to really be successful he couldn't sell them through his store alone. He needed to sell them through many stores. Since he thought other stores would be reluctant to sell an item that had his store's name on it, he decided to start the Saga Musical Instruments.

Richard started expanding the company to include kits for other instruments and then he started importing the instruments themselves. Saga's 120-page catalog now includes many types and styles of acoustic instruments, instrument kits, parts, and accessories. Throughout the years Richard has continued to work with factories in Asia to provide higher and higher quality instruments, while maintaining reasonable prices. However, the high-quality instruments Saga is offering today are the result of more than one man's determination. In order to get the rest of the equation, we have to look at what is going on in China.

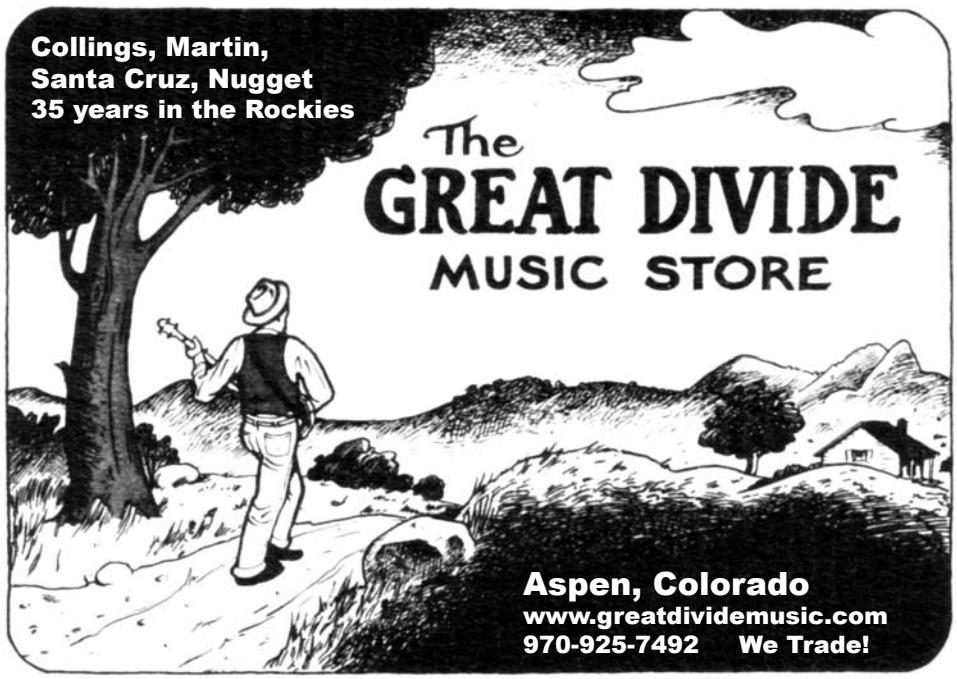
In the past decade China has opened up its doors and become a "favorable investment climate." Richard explains, "Many of the Chinese factories really are not Chinese." What happened was that when the investment climate became favorable in China, factory owners from Japan, Taiwan, and Korea began moving their factories there. Richard said, "When they moved to China, they made a real commitment. These factory owners where guys in their 50s who said to themselves, 'I've been working at this my whole life and this is my last chance.' They started to look at how they could do it better. They had the opportunity to use their years of experience in factory layout, machinery, and construction. The move to China was a huge step. Their whole life was on the line and so they started working 18- to 20-hour days. When people have dreams, it is hard to stop them!"

As Richard began to look for factories in China that he could work with, he sought out these determined and knowledgeable people. He said, "The hardest thing to find is the right factory. You don't want to waste your time working with the wrong guy. When I went there I searched for factory owners who were passionate and driven to get it right. I wanted somebody who was a madman!" With over twenty years of experience working with factories in Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, Richard's learning curve was behind him when he went to find the right factories to work with in China. He knew exactly what he wanted.

The next step was to communicate with these factories exactly what it was that he wanted in an instrument. Part of the process involved taking vintage instruments to China to help "set the bar." The other part of the process was having his product development team in the United States work with the Chinese owners and workers to help them understand what they were looking for and start making refinements. To accomplish this task, Richard works closely with his product manager, Adrian Bagale, and his product development specialist, Greg Rich. However, since the entire sales staff at Saga are players themselves, everyone is encouraged to provide feedback. And these guys are not just casual hobbyists. Every day during the noon lunch break at Saga there's a full-blown jam session where Richard, members of the sales staff, and some of the set-up and maintenance guys pull out Saga instruments and jam. When I visited the Saga's offices, I was invited to join the jam. So I can tell you from first hand experience, these folks can pick!

Richard feels fortunate to have guys like Adrian and Greg on his staff. Having years of experience working in Gibson's custom shop and designing Rich & Taylor instruments, Greg Rich offers valuable insight. Adrian not only lends his knowledge of the instruments and their construction, but he is also the guy who spends a great deal of time in China communicating with the factories. Richard said, "Adrian not only has to have the knowledge about the instruments, he also has to understand the Chinese culture and enjoy being over there."

Adrian, who is a guitar and mandolin player, said that once the right sources in China were located, the next part of the successful equation is staying in constant



contact with them. Through visits to China, email, exchanging drawings, and evaluating prototypes, Saga is continually working with the factories to refine the process. Adrian said, "We are constantly working to modify and refine the construction process and technique through quality surveillance and testing of everything that comes out of the factories. We do a lot of prototype building and testing. We are constantly seeking better tonal quality and instrument durability. We examine everything from the drying process, the finish that we use, the thicknessing of the wood, different material sources, and changing carving techniques. We are constantly refining the process. We keep trying until we get it right. Quality control and inspection are at the top of our list."

One of Richard Keldsen's frustrations is the tendency for players in the United States to lump all instruments coming out of Asia into the same quality category. He said, "People will refer to the 'Chinese violin' as if every violin coming out of China is the same. What they don't understand is that there may be 70 to 80 factories in China making violins, and they are all different." Unfortunately Saga's instruments have had to overcome the stigmatism of being made in Asia. Fortunately, Keldsen and his team continue to destroy that stereotype every time someone picks up a fine Blueridge or Gitane guitar.

Saga's full line of Blueridge model guitars can be divided into four different categories (outlined below). While looking over this list, keep in mind that "street prices" on all these models can dip well below the "list price" shown here. Also, if you are a rank beginner, or are looking for a guitar for someone who is just starting, you may want to explore Saga's Durango line. The list prices on the Durango guitars range from $179 through $295. Since most readers of this magazine are ready for a guitar that is something better than a beginner or student model, we will only cover the Blueridge and Gitane models in detail here.

The Blueridge models include:

Slope Shoulder Dreadnoughts: This series includes the BG-40, BG-60, BG-140, and BG-160 models. All of these guitars feature sloped shoulders, solid Sitka spruce tops, rosewood bridgeplate, dovetail neck joint, carved mahogany neck, open back vintage style tuners with grained ivoroid buttons, bone nut and saddle, mother-of-pearl and abalone fretboard inlay, vintage style pickguard, and a vintage style sunburst finish. The BG-40 has laminate mahogany back and sides, diamond snowflake inlay, and dark tortoise pickguard (list price $550). The BG-60 has laminate Brazilian rosewood back and sides, diamond snowflake inlay, and dark tortoise pickguard (list $595). The BG-140 has solid Honduran mahogany back and side, a Century Wreath inlay, and Dalmatian tortoise pickguard (list $795). The BG-160 has solid East Indian rosewood back and sides, a Century Wreath inlay, and Dalmatian tortoise pickguard (list $949).

Blueridge Contemporary Series: This series includes the BR-40, BR-60, BR-70 Dreadnoughts and the BR-43, BR-63, and BR-73 "000" style guitars. All of these models include solid Sitka spruce tops with hand-carved parabolic braces in authentic pre-war forward X-position bracing; rosewood bridge and bridgeplate; natural high-gloss finish; East Indian rosewood fingerboard with adjustable truss rod; carved mahogany neck; rosewood peghead overlay; dovetail neck joint; bone nut and saddle; black pickguard; and Kluson-style individual tuners with 14:1 ratio, ribbed covers and oval "butterbean" buttons. The BR-40 and BR-43 models have mahogany back and sides; 5-ply body binding; mother-of-pearl dot markers; and nickel-plated Kluson-style tuners (list $495). The BR-60 and BR-63 models have choice rosewood back, sides and peghead overlay, elegant multi-line rosette and backstrip, 5-ply binding, mother-of-pearl dot markers, and nickel-plated Kluson tuners (list $550). The BR-70 and BR-73 models include "style 41" abalone top purfling; Brazilian rosewood back, sides and peghead overlay; delicate wood marquetry backstrip; abalone rosette and top purfling; white body, neck and headstock binding; outlined hexagonal abalone position markers; gold-plated Kluson-style tuners (list $695).

Blueridge Historic Series: This series includes the BR-140, BR-160, and BR-180 Dreadnoughts, and the BR-143, BR-163, and BR-163 "000" style guitars. All of these models include all-solid wood construction; hand-carved parabolic top braces in authentic pre-war forward-X position; rosewood bridgeplate; bone nut and saddle; high-gloss finish with aging toner; rosewood peghead overlay with mother-of-pearl and abalone inlays; carved, mahogany neck with adjustable truss rod; dovetail neck joint; Saga's exclusive tortoise-style pickguard; and Kluson-style individual tuners with 14:1 ratio gears; ribbed covers and oval "butterbean" buttons. The BR-140 and BR-143 models have a "style-18 classic roots" sound; choice mahogany back and sides; select solid Sitka top with elegant black and white striped rosette; and nickel-plated tuners (list $750). The BR-160 and BR-163 models are "style 28" guitars with fine solid Sitka spruce tops that have the traditional herringbone rosette & purfling; select, solid East Indian rosewood back and sides, fretboard, and bridgeplate; delicate wood marquetry blackstrap; white body binding; pre-war style "split diamond" abalone snowflake markers, and nickel-plate tuners (list $895). The BR-183 and BR-183 models are "style 45" with abalone inlay "everywhere." These models include premium Sitka spruce top with abalone rosette & purfling; premium East Indian rosewood back and sides; delicate wood marquetry backstrip; ebony bridge with abalone dot-inlayed ebony bridge pins; traditional carved diamond volute on back of headstock; premium ebony fingerboard with pre-war "split diamond" abalone snowflake markers; white body and neck binding; and gold-plated tuners (list $1395). Saga also makes a cutaway version of the BR-143 (BR-143CE) that comes with a pickup (list $1095).

Blueridge "Pre-War" Series: This series includes the BR-240, BR-260, and BR-280 Dreadnoughts and the BR-243, BR-263, and BR-283 "000" style guitars. These are the top-of-the-line models and all include all-solid wood construction; ebony fingerboard and bridge; hand-carved scalloped body bracing including forward-X top bracing; maple bridgeplate built and placed exactly as in pre-war Dreadnoughts; bone nut and saddle; high-gloss finish with aging toner; rosewood peghead overlay with mother-of-pearl and abalone inlays; carved mahogany neck with adjustable truss rod; dovetail neck joint; Saga's exclusive tortoise-style pickguard, and Kluson-style individual tuners with 14:1 ratio gears; ribbed covers and oval "butterbean" buttons. The BR-240 and BR-243 models are "style-18" with solid mahogany back and sides and nickel plated tuners (list $1095). The BR-260 and BR-263 are "style 28" guitars with solid Brazilian rosewood back and sides; traditional "zig-zag" herringbone-style back strip and butt inlays; and nickel-plated tuners (list $2595). The BR-280 and BR-283 are "style 45" guitars with abalone inlay "everywhere";

solid Brazilian rosewood back and sides; and gold-plated Kluson-style tuners.

Gitane Gypsy Jazz Style: Saga offers four different models in the Gitane "Gypsy jazz style" series, which are all designed to be copies of Selmer's Maccaferri-style jazz guitars. All models include a solid spruce top, horizontal cutaway, moustache bridge with moveable center, dovetail neck joint, bone nut, zero fret, and trapeze tailpiece. The D-500 is the large D-shaped soundhole model and includes the slotted headstock. The D-250 is the oval-shaped soundhole model and does not have the slotted headstock. The D-255 is the same as the D-250, but with a slotted headstock. The D-250M is a maple version of the D-250 which has birdseye maple back and sides and headstock overlay (solid headstock). The D-250, D-500, and D-255 list for $895. The D-250M lists for $949. The top of the line Gitane model is the new John Jorgenson signature model, the DG-300. This model is similar to the D-255, however, it includes Brazilian rosewood back and sides; ebony overlay and underlay; neck profile designed by John Jorgenson; "Modele John Jorgenson" in gold script on the peghead; signed label; Dalmatian tortoise body binding; inlaid wooden rosette with Dalmatian tortoise square insert and Dalmatian center rings, deluxe gold engraved tuners with grained ivoroid buttons; and gold-plated tailpiece with Dalmatian tortoise insert (list $1395).

After meeting with Saga's owner, Richard Keldsen, and various members of his staff, I can tell you that they take great pride in their product because the majority of them are players and they use Saga instruments every day. As I passed by each office and each sales person's workspace I saw well-worn Saga instruments propped up against the walls or on stands. They are connected to the instruments and the music, and are the instruments that they offer are proof of that. Call 800-BUY-SAGA and ask for the dealer nearest you. You can also visit Saga on the web at www.sagamusic.com.

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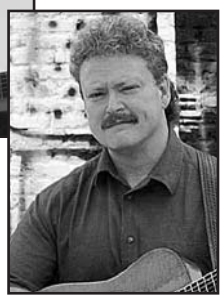

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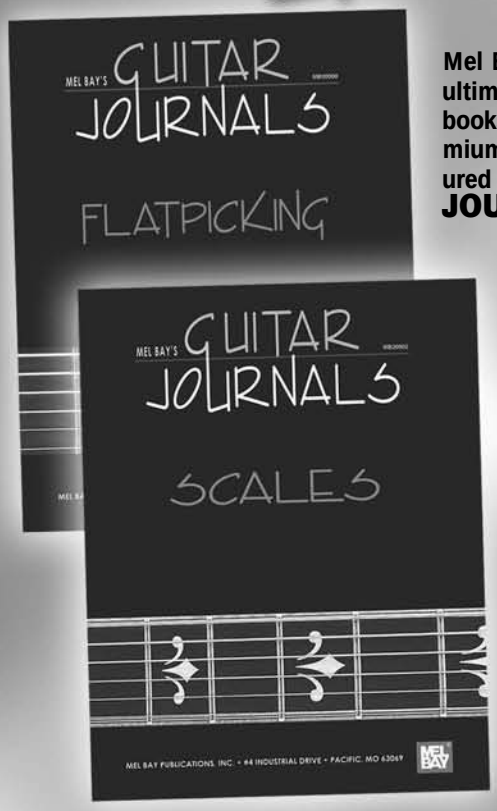
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Break Time

by Chris Jones

Down Down Down

Many of the guitarists I encounter in workshops and at camps who are at the intermediate or even the advanced levels are uncomfortable with the idea of straying from alternating pick direction (except, of course, for any readers of Brad Davis' columns!). It even seems unnatural to some to play two quarter notes in a row as two downstrokes. Well, I am here to make you comfortable with the downstroke. In fact, in the break I have tabbed out upstrokes—though I have nothing against them personally (I sent lovely Christmas cards to many upstrokes last year)—will be temporarily banished.

Why the downstroke, you ask? The downstroke creates a different feel and color to what you're playing, and no matter how solid your upstroke may be, the downstroke simply has more punch. This makes it ideal for slow and medium bluesy songs, or for that matter non-or semi-bluesy songs, like the example I've used here, "The Long Black Veil." Besides, it works for mandolin players. Just ask Bill Monroe, who was quoted by very unreliable sources as saying, "Downstrokes are where it's at...here today," or words to that effect.

The difficulty with downstrokes is that it's not easy to get them up to speed when you're stringing a bunch of them together. This is why people don't play fiddle tunes with all downstrokes, aside from the fact that they wouldn't have the necessary flow and would sound just plain wrong. Sadly, I have no miracle right-hand trick for playing downstrokes at faster tempos. It just takes practice. If you find the "Long Black Veil" to be too difficult because of that, simply slow it down as much as you want to, and slowly build it back up.

Songs like this one are also tailor-made for plenty of double-stops because they tend to go hand-in-hand with downstrokes, so I included a lot in the tab. I've discussed those extensively in some previous columns, so I won't belabor the subject now, except to remind you to hit those two strings with precision and authority so they sound more like a single note. Note that a lot of these double-stops work out of the G chord, though you may find yourself varying the position of your G chord as needed.

Incidentally, this is a half break, which tends to suit this kind of song well; often a whole break would seem a little long. Because the melody repeats itself in the verse, it works either as the first or second half of a verse break. It would sound great with a fiddle or Dobro playing the other half (oboe or zither wouldn't be bad either).

The last point I would make about this kind of break is that it needs to be played forcefully, right from the first intro note, to pull all of the tone out of those downstrokes you can. "Long Black Veil" is a sad song, and unique because it's one of the few songs I know where a dead man tells the story. There's no reason, however, to play it as if you're also dead, so go ahead and lean into it. You can always soften it up in places later for dynamic interest.

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Chris Jones

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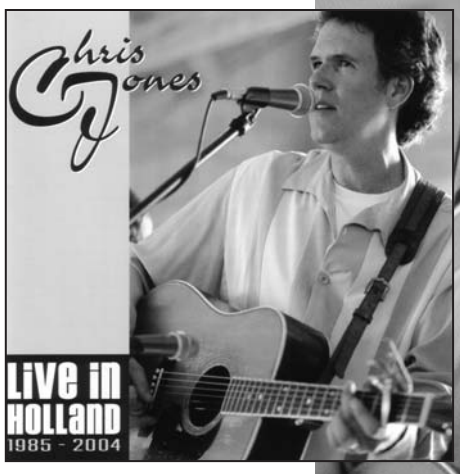

Live in Holland

Audio CD
Tracks 16-17

Long Black Veil

Arranged by
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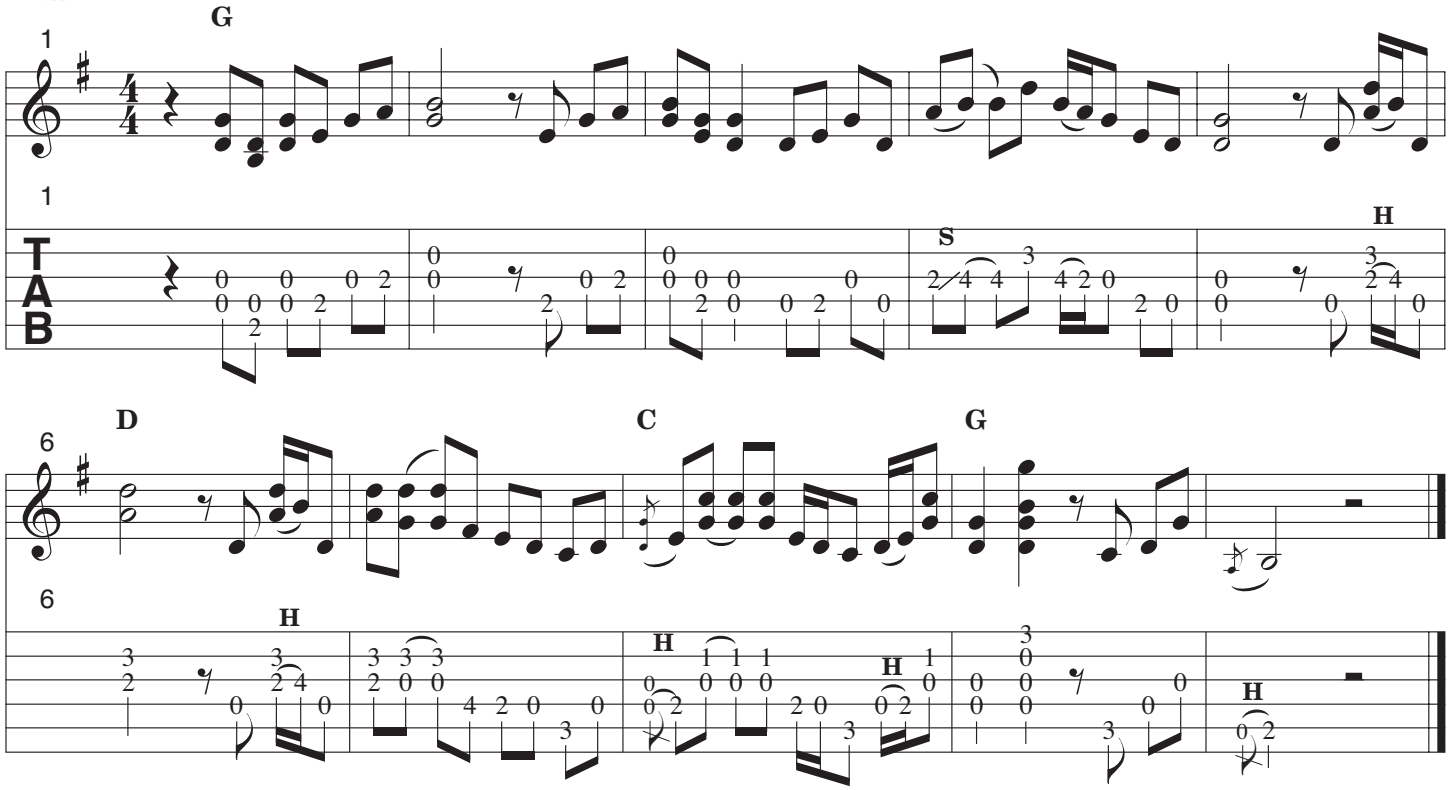
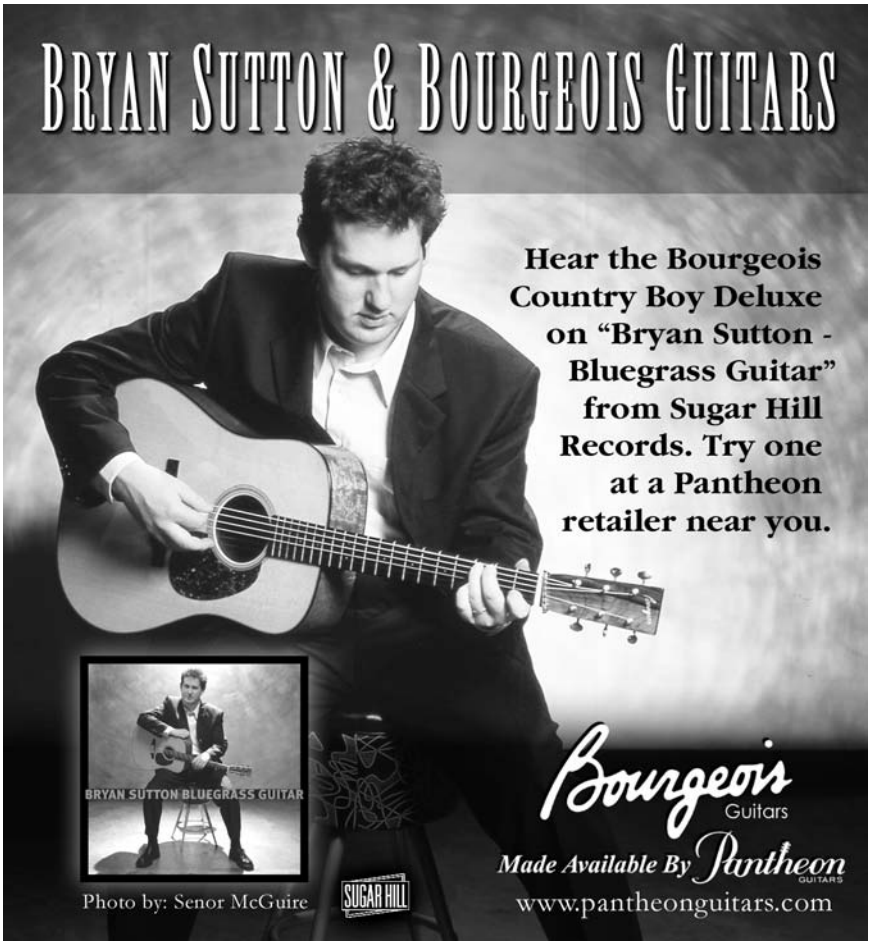
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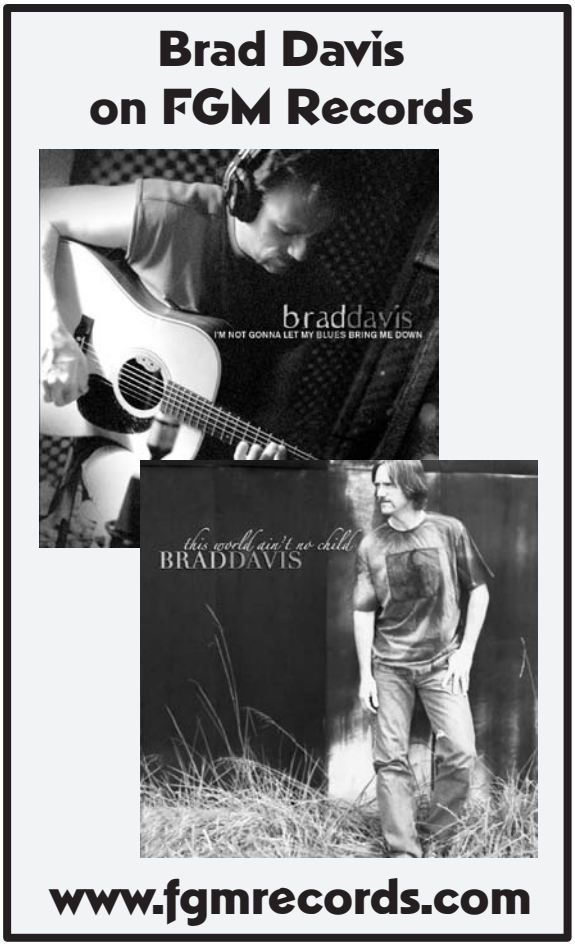


Gypsy Jazz Guitar

by Paul Mehling

Minor Swing
Django's 1937 masterpiece solo

We're continuing our study of the Hot Club de France recording that changed the world, "Minor Swing." Last time we mapped out the chords and hopefully you've all had a chance to internalize (memorize) them, perhaps you've even made your own play-along recordings. (Note: There's been a proliferation in these kinds of recordings being purchased by aspiring players. While I think they're a great learning tool, they're also creating a new strain of Gypsy guitarists who can't play rhythm because they simply play solos along with the rhythm tracks on these recordings, instead of playing rhythm with the tracks. This is not a good situation. As Alain Cola from Dell Arte Guitars says: "Everybody wants to be Django and nobody wants to be Joseph!" You can't jam with others if you can't play rhythm. Simply put: Django was one helluva rhythm player and if you want to follow him you gotta learn to play rhythm!)

So, we start off with three chords, two of which are played as pickup notes to the actual beginning of the tune. You'll want to listen to the original recording to really understand this solo and by the time we're finished you'll be playing along with it! Guaranteed!

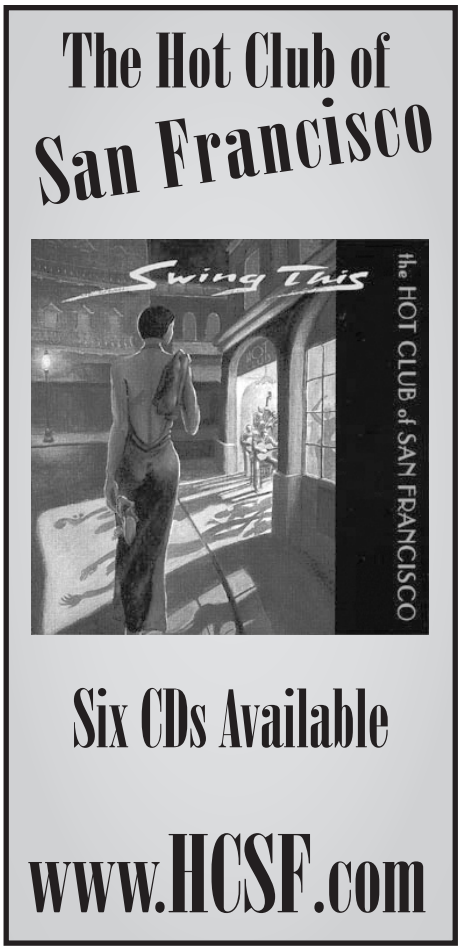
The first chord is a C diminished, the second is E9 (with no bass note, no E note), and the third is A minor sixth—the root or home key chord. Our first skirmish, or point of contention, might be the Cdim-to-E9 change. Some people play this as either Cdim-to-Bdim or F9-to-E9. Personally (and this is why they pay me the big bucks) I hear it as Cdim-to-E9, two very similar chords moving in half-steps but with the note F# staying constant. A little trick Django has played on us: he's selling us the 6th note of A minor 6: the most pungent alteration and the great harmonic contribution of the Gypsies to jazz. Though he had a handicapped left hand he still did things right. Always easy, but always right. Keep that in mind, it'll come up again!

Having firmly established the key center of A minor with this introduction, Django then reveals one of the most important building blocks of Gypsy style guitar playing, the appoggiatura! You don't need to know the name, but the concept is simple: it's a trill, usually consisting of at least one triplet and usually encircling one chord tone. It's a device that should be fully understood and executable by any Gypsy jazzer worth his salt.

We've discussed the appoggiatura in previous articles, so here's the nickel tour. You take one note of a chord (a chord tone, and in this case it's the note A, since we're in A minor and that seems appropriate and obvious!), and play the note, then play a hammer-on two frets above that (a whole step, usually), then we come back down to the chord tone and play it. Next we drop down (you can even slide the first finger down to this note and back up to the A as Django did, using the 2-finger technique that was required for him due to his immobile 3rd and 4th fingers) a half-step below the A and then back to the A. This pattern is continued for the first measure. It's not only a cool harmonic device but it has a certain rhythmic propulsion to it as well. It turns up in nearly all of Django's solos (believe it or not!) in one way or another. This one measure alone can be a week (or more!) of study for you. Memorize, internalize and experiment with this all over the fingerboard.

The next measure is simple: it outlines a D minor chord. In fact, it is a D minor chord spelled out one note at a time, which makes it an arpeggio (but you knew that already, right?). We go down the arpeggio, picking one note at a time, rest for a few beats and then use the same chord/arpeggio to launch (sweep the pick across the strings) into the next measure. That's a C (major) scale starting on D (okay, you could call it a D minor scale—but that just makes things more difficult, no?) and returning to yet another appoggiatura on the note G# which is certainly not in the key of C (or A minor or D minor) but it clearly explains that we're on a E7 chord now. Even the note E wouldn't make it as clear, would it?

This is another very important device you should study: arpeggiating the chords of a tune so that the listener knows where you are in the tune so they don't have to pay too much attention. Sometimes you might hear a soloist blowing all kinds of notes and you think—wow, that's impossible to follow. You may think it doesn't make sense. But you know if you keep the tune in your head while you listen to them going crazy you can see what they're doing and where they're doing it and it seems to make waaay



more sense. The good news is that this music doesn't require that much from the listener, and our job is to give it to them in such a way that they can digest it without effort. So, we spell out arpeggios, but we do it with as much melodic creativity as we can muster. This is the "secret" to Gypsy jazz: melodic arpeggios (and a ton of ornamentations!).

The solo continues with that same G# (we're still on E7!) and swoops up a nice little E7 arpeggio going to the F natural, which is important because it's the flat nine (b9) on the E7. You may recall reading here that another great device that Django coined (and many followers still utilize) is the trick of turning b9 chords into diminished chords. (Quick review! Let's do the math: E7 = E-G#-B-D plus the flat nine note F natural, F diminished = F-G#-B-D. Hmmmmmmmmm?) This part of the solo ends with a nice glissando (slide) down from the C to the A, which once again pretty well defines an A minor chord.

Django made those choices based on intuition, instinct, or just plain musical genius. For us mere mortals who aspire to play in a similarly swinging and compelling way we must do more than rely upon our good intentions. We need to study what he did, figure out why and how, and then try to do the same when it's our turn in front of the microphone.

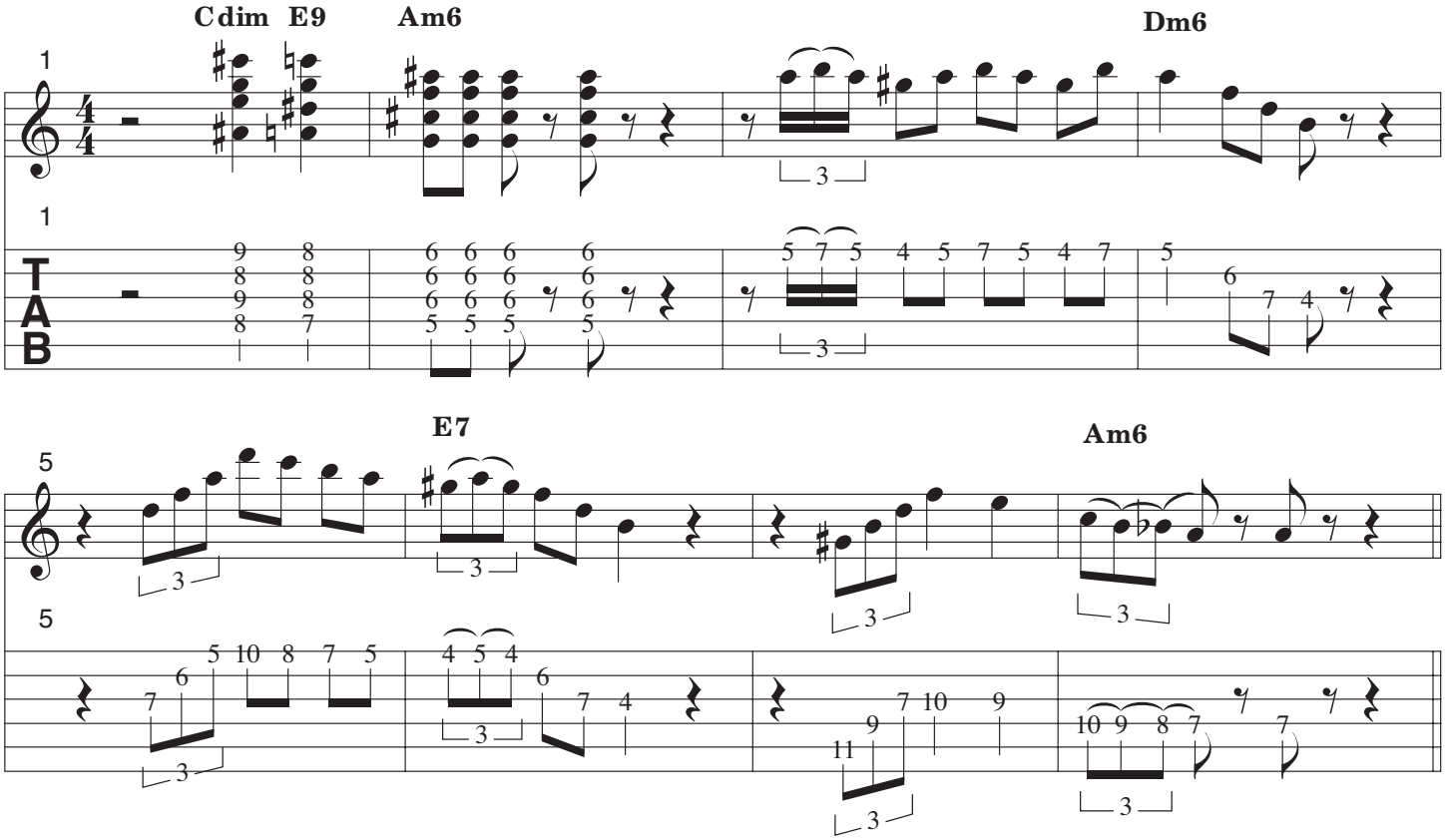
This whole approach may seem to be more trouble than it's worth (too much thinking and not enough playing?) but it works for me and countless others who've gone before us. Don't kid yourself. The Gypsies themselves do this when they memorize Django solos. They may not talk about it, but it's a sure bet that they—like Django himself—understand why and how each note functions. There are never any wasted notes in this music. Each note has a purpose, either harmonically or rhythmically or both!

Next time we'll continue with this solo. In the meantime play this much and really hear the chord changes underneath the solo. It's a story Django's weaving for us and though we may have heard it a million times, we love to hear him tell it over and over.

Paul Mehling (aka Pazzo) is the leader of the notorious Hot Club of San Francisco, with 8 CDs in 12 years and constant appearances all over the planet. On the music scene in northern California all his life, his dedication to jazz, especially Gypsy-Swing has in some small way, hopefully, made the world a safer place for music. www.HCSF.com

Audio CD
Tracks 18

Minor Swing
(beginning)

Arranged by
Django Reinhardt

THE O-ZONE

by Orrin Star

Miller's Reel

As I noted a while back (in my column on "Cattle in the Cane"), learning a fiddle tune is sometimes akin to a romance that starts out as a friendship. You may be aware and even fond of a tune for years but not really take the time to learn it until that one day when you hear it afresh and it really grabs you.

I was at a Baltimore contradance in December and the fiddler was kicking butt on this vaguely familiar melody that sounded at first like "Bill Cheatham" but then got raggy. At the break I asked him what it was: "Miller's Reel."

Hearing the title jogged my memory. I'd heard Norman Blake's recording of the tune years ago. Not having that LP handy, I consulted my copy of the *The Guitar Player's Fakebook* (the thick Oak Publications volume by David Brody) and set about learning it.

The cool-if-challenging thing about the Fakebook is that it's pretty much a direct transcription of his *Fiddler's Fakebook*. Pure fiddle lines, while often beautifully melodic, usually require some special arranging before they become ergonomic on the old six string.

Hence, I have moved his arrangement from A to G and tweaked it here and there. Pay special attention to the fingering indications in the tab; they are the result of much experimentation and concentration ("the things I do for you people!") and some of them will surprise you.

Brody lists four sources for his version of "Miller's Reel," including recordings by Byron Berline, the Red Clay Ramblers, and a County Records compilation of Texas fiddle favorites. It's clear that this tune can really swing and would make a good contest piece.

The corollary of which is, of course, that it is a bit of a bear to play (even with my key change and other artifices). So take your time with it. It will pay you back with interest.

Orrin Star is an award-winning guitar, banjo and mandolin player who now lives and teaches in the Washington, DC area. The 1976 National Flatpicking Champion, he has toured and recorded widely, is the author of Hot Licks for Bluegrass Guitar *and now performs mostly solo and in a duo with Jimmy Gaudreau. See www.orrinstar.com.*

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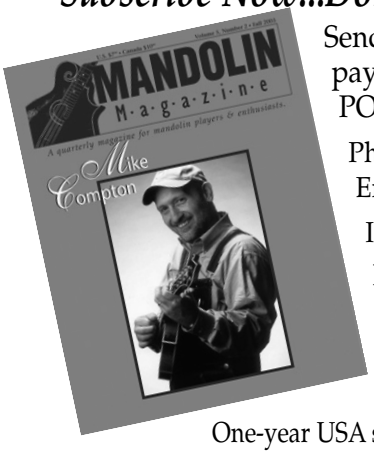

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Tracks 20-21

Miller's Reel

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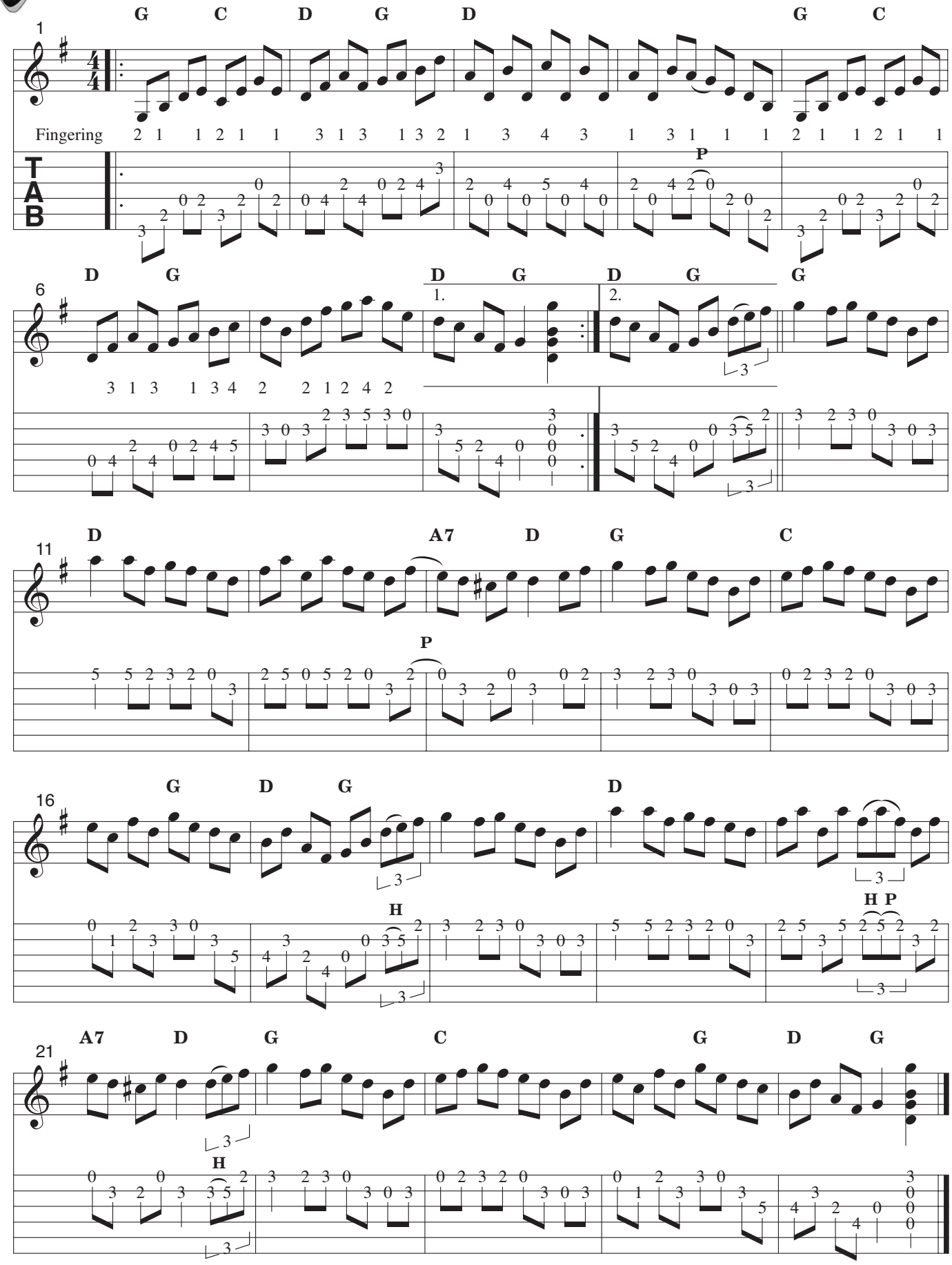
Orrin Star

Moving Up the Neck

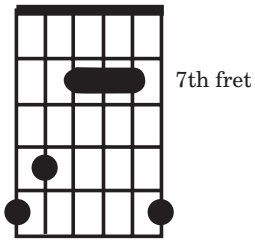
by Dan Miller

Another Tune in D

In the last issue we took a look at an arrangement of "Forked Deer" that was based on the D scale played in two different positions. In this issue I will present a version of "Arkansas Traveler" that utilizes the same D scale pattern as the A section of "Forked Deer," yet also relies on the use of a held D chord position.

When either improvising or arranging solos, two tools or "maps" that you can use when visualizing the solo on the fretboard are the "scale map" and/or the "chord position map." When arranging the "Forked Deer" solo in the last issue I played the tune with the scale map in mind. In this issue when I arranged the A section of "Arkansas Traveler" I tried to hold onto the D chord position that is based on the "G chord shape" (see diagram below) at the seventh fret.

D



If you are familiar with the "CAGED" system, you will recognize this as the "G" shape used in that system. If you are not familiar with the CAGED system, simply think about having a capo on the seventh fret and playing a G chord. Now, this is not going to be a chord that you will probably ever hold in its complete form (all six strings), but if you will recognize its pattern, it can come in handy when visualizing playing on this part of the fingerboard in the key of D. When you are playing a solo you can hold down a part of this chord, and this is what I do for the majority of the A section of "Arkansas Traveler."

When playing measures 2 through 6 of the A section (see tab on the next page) I'm holding my index finger across the D, G, and B strings at the 7th fret. Then I let go of that shape to play measure 8, but I put it right back half way through measure 9 in order to get ready to go back to measure 2 for the repeat of the A part.

If you will remember hearing my fast version of "Forked Deer" on last issue's audio CD, and you read what I had to say about it, you will recall that I was not happy with my performance because my notes sounded too choppy. I mentioned in that issue that I was going to work to try and overcome this problem and report back to you regarding my progress.

The first thing I thought to do was based on a common sense approach. I thought, "Well, you are having trouble fitting in that many notes so what you've got to do is not play so many notes." You'll notice that my arrangement of "Arkansas Traveler" has more quarter notes and repeated notes than my version of "Forked Deer." So the first step was to try and create more time for myself by playing less notes.

The next thing I did was to think about all of the great advice that our columnists have provided over the years. I remember Orrin Star saying that in order for the tune to flow smoothly you had to "squeeze all of the juice out of each note." To me this meant holding onto each note as long as I could before I went to play the next note. Holding down that D chord shape helped because it facilitated a ringing of those notes and helped get rid of that choppy sound that I heard in my fast version of "Forked Deer."

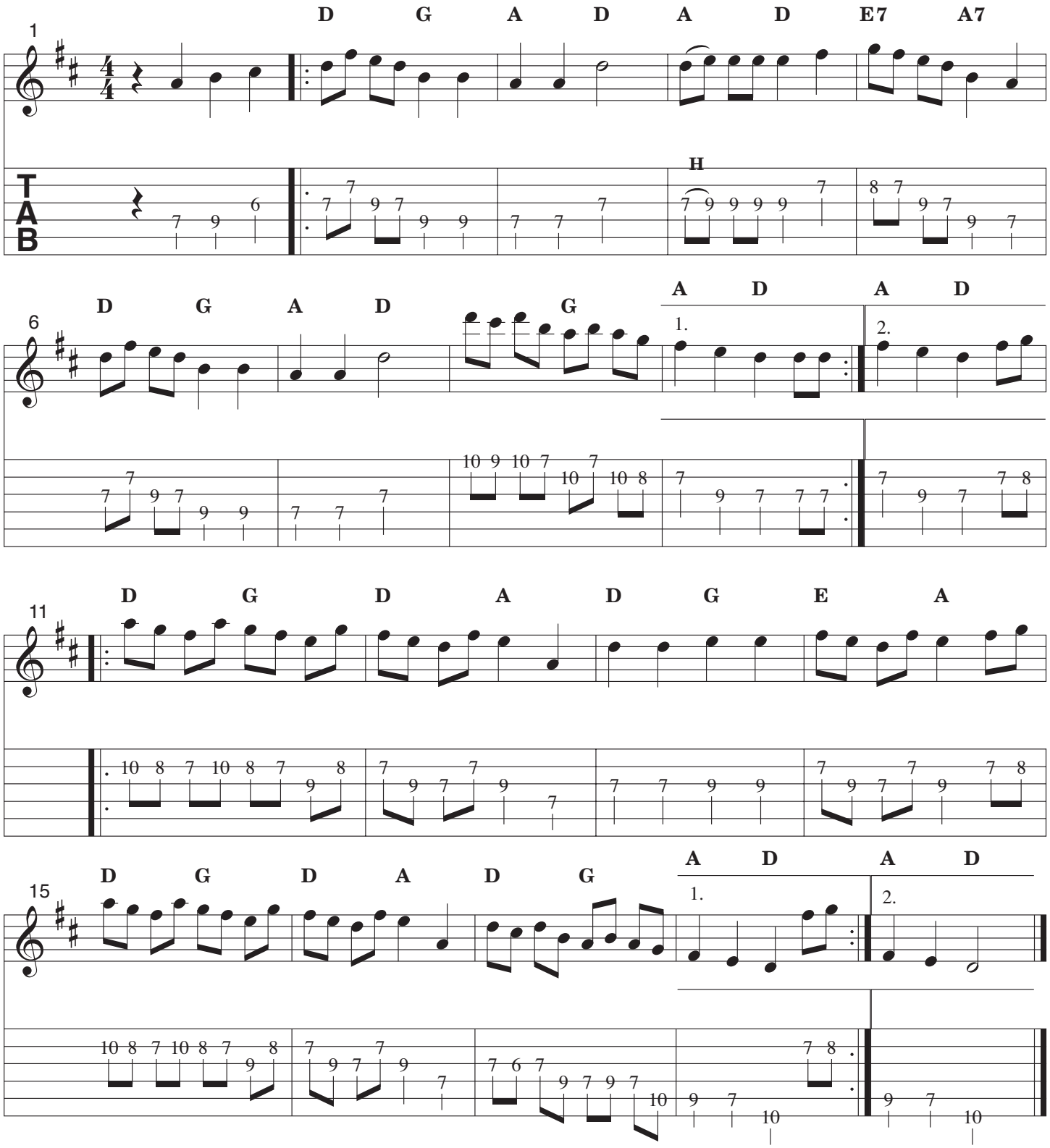
The second thing I remembered from a past issue was Joe Carr's column about playing "quick." I knew that to "squeeze the juice" I had to hold those notes longer, but in order to do that it meant that once I let go I had to get to that next note "quickly." This doesn't have anything to do with speeding up, it is just thinking about holding a note longer and then moving quickly to the next note. I was visiting with Brad Davis while I was working on this column and after hearing me play a little Brad's advice was to "work on better coordination between the right and left hand," So I began working to hold notes longer, getting to the next note quickly, and coordinating those left hand principles with right hand pick movements.

The result was a feeling of improvement. Listen to the fast version of "Arkansas Traveler" and see if you think that I made some progress. I still have some work to do before I'm completely happy, and before I can crank it up any faster. But I'm having a lot of fun trying to get it right and by spending practice time focused on this goal I feel like my practice time was well spent. Which reminds me of another columnist's advice. Dan Crary says to create small, accomplishable goals and work to achieve them. Advice from four of our columnists has made me a better player. And you thought I didn't read this magazine! (You know who you are...the ones I've jammed with who call out a tune I haven't learned and say, "Well, it was in your magazine!")

If you record yourself and feel as though your solos are a little "choppy" and the notes are getting clipped off, try slowing down a little and rearranging your solo so that you include more space between some of the notes. Also, try arranging the solo so that you can hold down a chord shape and thus not have to move your fingers around so much. Then focus on "squeezing the juice," playing with quickness, and being aware of coordinating your right hand picking with your left hand "juice squeezing" and quick movements. See if you can't let those notes ring even when you are playing at faster speeds. Good Luck!

Audio CD
Tracks 22-24

Arkansas Traveler

Arranged by
Dan Miller

Cold Frosty Morning

by Kathy Barwick

In the last issue, I presented a "melodic" arrangement of "Jerusalem Ridge," using a "melodic" style Am scale built around the Am chord that lies between the 5th and 7th frets. I suggested "Cold Frosty Morning" as another tune to try with this approach. So I thought, why not just go ahead and present an arrangement? So here we go.

"Cold Frosty Morning" is a traditional fiddle tune. I did a little research on it and still don't know whether it's American or Celtic—so perhaps it's just old, and probably a bit of both. (By the way, in asking around about this tune, I was directed to a very interesting website, www.loc.gov, which is the website of the Library of Congress. Search for "Henry Reed," snoop around, and you'll find out all kinds of interesting things about the fiddle tunes we all know and love.)

As an old tune, there are different ways to play it. My version is loosely based on (or at least informed by) Bela Fleck's recording of the tune on *Crossing the Tracks*. The chord progression shown here is a bit modernized from the traditional sources I have found, particularly in the B part, where instead of holding the Am in the progression as I've heard some do, we change to A major. You can hear two alternative and simpler progressions, both interesting and probably closer to old-time ways of playing the tune, by looking up this tune at alltabs.com. The versions on alltabs are mandolin arrangements, but if you play the midi-file you can hear how the different progressions sound.

Mike Maddux presented this tune as "Frosty Morning" in Volume 8, Number 5 (July/August 2004). True to folk music form, Mike's chord progression is slightly different than what I present here. Otherwise, it's the same tune. Mike also uses the same basic Am position that I use here at the end of his arrangement (see m. 13 of Mike's arrangement). As a final note before we get into the tune, I've provided a few alternatives for some of the sections of the tune. See the examples, as noted, at the end of the arrangement.

My arrangement kicks off in the standard Am chord at the low end of the neck. In measure 2, we slide quickly up the neck to the Am scale position I used in "Jerusalem Ridge." (I put the kick-off measure here to indicate where the tune starts; however, I would generally play a down-the-neck arrangement to kick the tune off, rather than this arrangement. In that case, it's easier to begin this arrangement at measure 2.)

In measures 2 and at the end of M9, use the ring finger for that E note (4th string, 2nd fret), then quickly slide to fret 7. Sometimes I use the middle finger and switch to the ring finger [anywhere in M2 (or 10) is fine, whatever's easiest for you] so that when I get to M3 (or 11), I'm ready to go. Or, you can stick with the middle finger. I do recommend starting measures 3 and 11 with the ring finger.

The tag phrase that begins on the last count of M7 is repeated numerous times throughout the tune. I've presented a couple of alternatives to plug in when you get tired of hearing that one. Example 1 starts on the 1st beat of M7; examples 2 and 3 begin on the last beat of measures 7, 15, 23 or 31. And, Mike's last phrase in his arrangement is a nice alternative as well.

In M12, use your ring finger on the slide, then drop the index on the 2nd string 3rd fret—you're playing a partial G chord here in kind of a banjo roll (aka crosspicking). I use an up-down-up-down pattern for the right hand. With that fingering, you're ready, in the 2nd half of M13, to keep your ring finger down, move it to the 6th fret, and drop the middle and index fingers down in what you might recognize as the "inside" part of a down-the-neck D chord. Here, it's moved up 2 frets and forms an E chord—though note that it's a passing chord—the chord progression doesn't go to E here.

M14 returns to the Am scale position. In M15, use your ring finger for the 4th string note, then use the time provided by the open note that follows to move the ring finger to play the 3rd string 5th fret, so your index is free for the 2nd string 3rd fret that follows.

The B part starts on M18. Note that we're switching from Am to A major in the chord progression. M18 is an A chord played out of an "F" position—barre strings 1 and 2 with your index. In M20, just brush, or strum quickly, that first chord, with an emphasis on the last note—the open 1st string—which is the melody note. M26 is a variation of that section of the melody, using the same chord position. Measures 20-21, 28-29, and Example 4 are also interchangeable.

I hope you like this arrangement. If you worked on Jerusalem Ridge from my last column, this one will be a snap. It's really fun to play, too, once you get the hang of those melodic-style scales and licks.

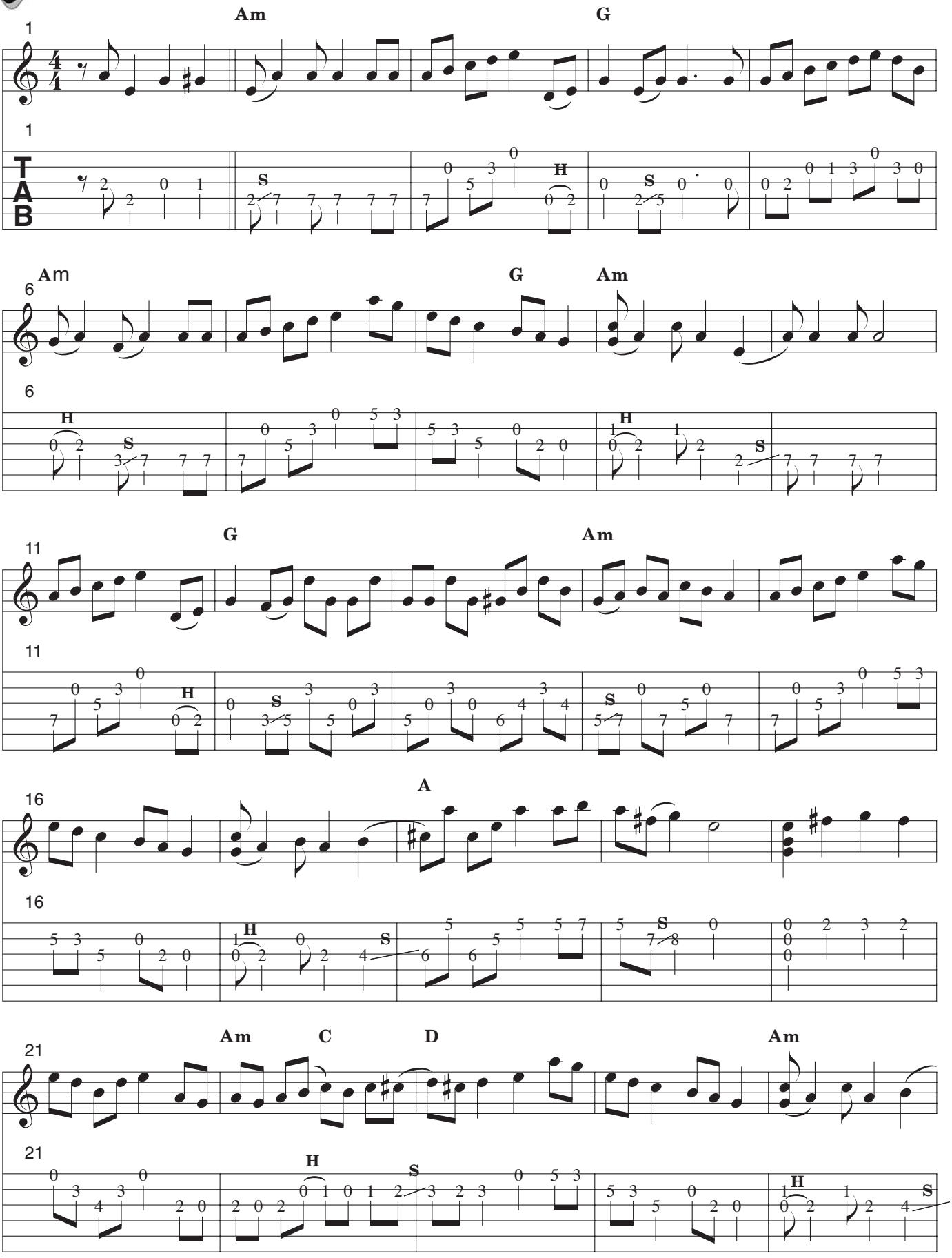
P.S., I need to correct a couple of errors in the last column. I've provided the correct G major and Am scales for your perusal (see Editor's Corner on page 2). My apologies if you were confused by my last column!

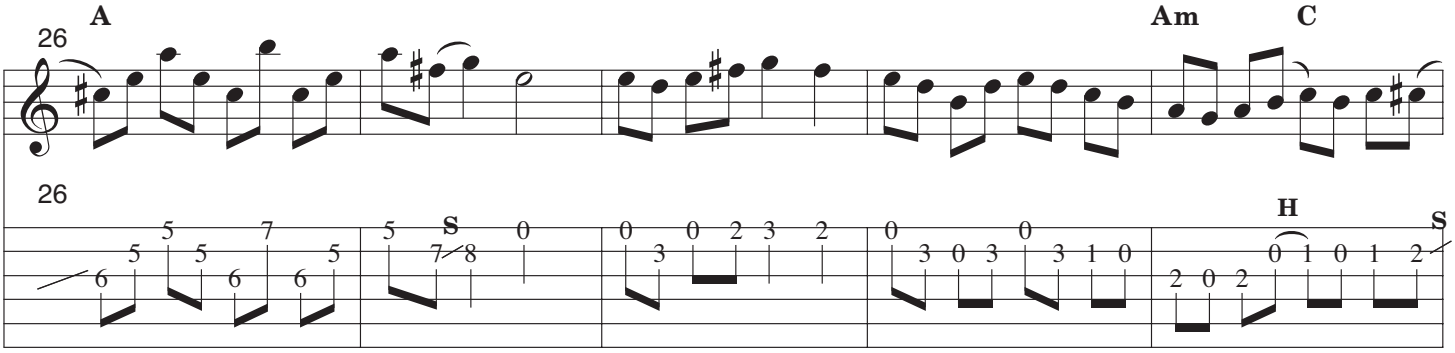
Kathy Barwick has played guitar since 1970, when she began learning folk-style fingerpicking. A reformed banjo picker, she also plays resophonic guitar and acoustic bass, and has performed over the years with various bluegrass bands. A founding member of The All Girl Boys—what Pete Wernick once called "the best name in bluegrass"—Kathy now plays resophonic guitar with Mountain Laurel, a bluegrass band based in the Grass Valley area of northern California.

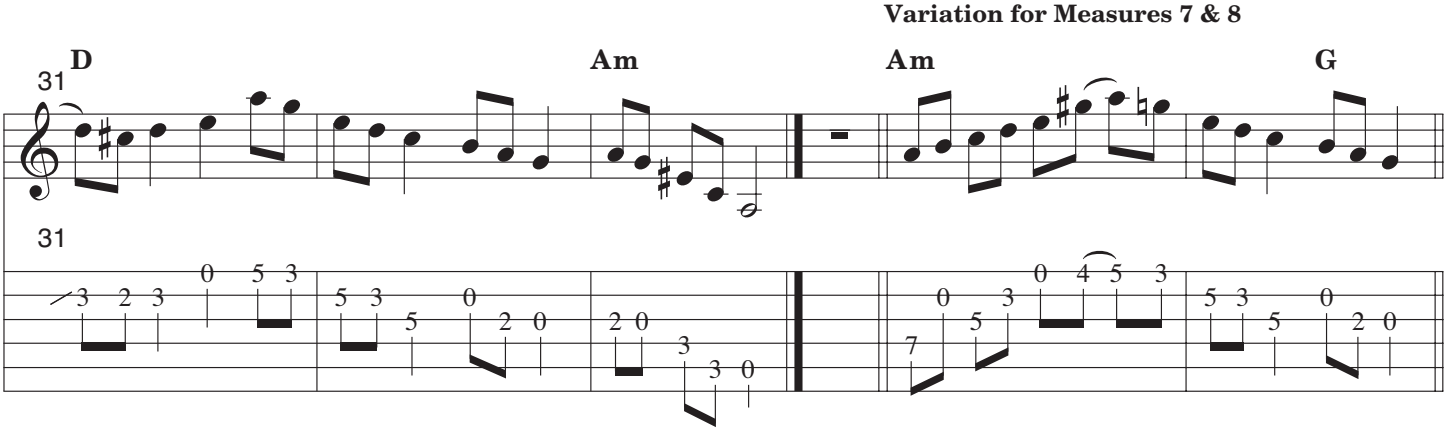
A Sacramento resident, Kathy plays guitar whenever she can, as well as giving private lessons on guitar, resophonic guitar, and bass. She welcomes your feedback and/or comments; you can contact her at kbar95816@yahoo.com.

Audio CD
Tracks 23-24

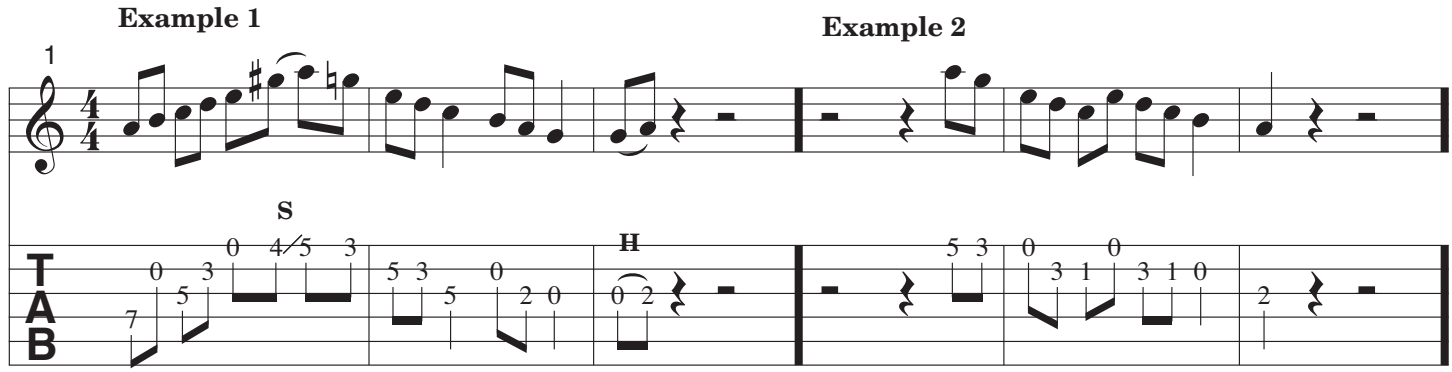
Cold Frosty Morning

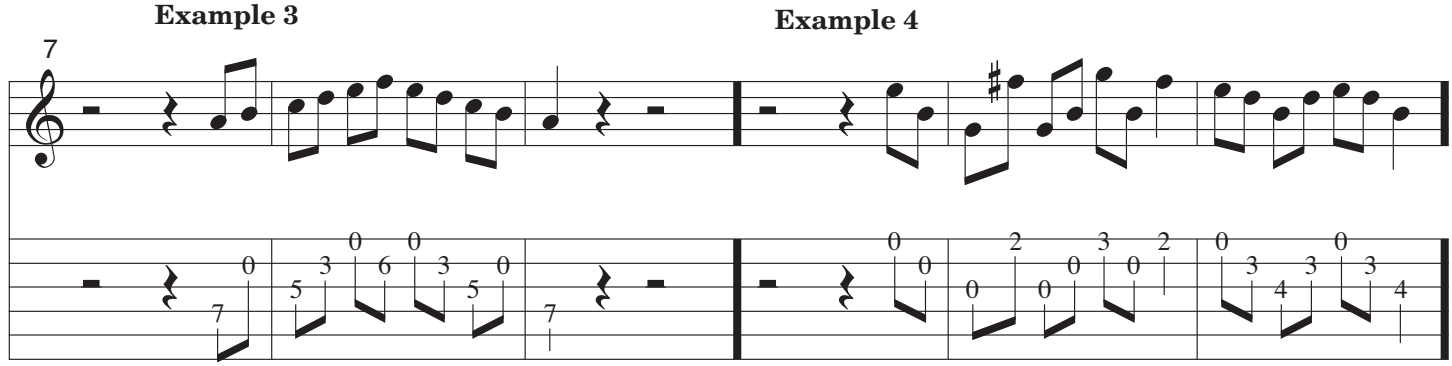
Arranged by
Kathy Barwick

Cold Frosty Morning (con't)





Examples





It Don't Mean A Thing
in Different Octaves – Part II
by Dix Bruce

This is part two of a column that ran in the last issue of *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*. It's recommended that you work through part 1 before you tackle part 2 below.

By now you've memorized and played versions of the melody to "It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got That Swing" in two different octaves: middle and upper. On the next page is the lower octave melody. It's pitched one octave below the middle octave. As before, memorize it and learn the suggested fretting finger numbers.

Once you've memorized all three octaves and regions, exercise what you've learned by playing them as separate solos in the tune. As each settles into your musical consciousness, make small changes in the melody and begin to compose a solo. Eventually you'll develop three distinct solos in three different regions of the guitar.

A side benefit of learning three versions of the melody to "It Don't Mean a Thing..." is that you'll feel more comfortable playing other tunes in minor keys in these same regions.

Try locating other melodies you know in these general areas using these suggested fingerings and see what develops.

Now let's look at the chords to "It Don't Mean a Thing…" The tonality of the song shifts back and forth between Gm and Bb so you'll need to know quite a few chords to play back-up rhythm.

There are a few somewhat unusual chords and you may not be familiar with the way they are identified: Gm/Gb, Gm/F, or Gm/E. Gm chords with a slash ("/") tell you to play a Gm chord with a certain bass note, which is shown after the slash. So, when you see "Gm/Gb" you need to play a Gm chord with a Gb note in the bass. All the chords are shown on page 48.

The small "x" below a chord grid means that you should not sound that string. It's usually best to mute these strings with part of your fretting hand. I've given you a variety of different types of chord forms in different regions of the fingerboard. Some mute strings one and five, some four and six, some five and six. Each form and position has a unique sound. And, since they're all closed position chords with no open strings, you can move them individually up and down the fingerboard or move the whole progression to different keys.

The small number to the right of some of the chord grids tells you at which fret the chord form is made. Try to start thinking of these shapes as a generic form, rather than a specific chord with a letter name. The form used for C7 can be moved to any number of dominant seven chords up the fingerboard. Where ever you place it, it will be named differently so it's limiting to think of it as a "C7" rather than a generic "dominant seven" form.

If you're interested in working more with swing and jazz chords, tunes, and melodies, check out my *BackUP TRAX: Swing & Jazz* play along book/CD set. While it doesn't include "It Don't Mean a Thing…" it does have a dozen great swing progressions. You play along with the recorded band, rhythm or lead, and we'll jam all night long!

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Additionally, Wyatt is shown improvisationally accompanying various instruments (banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin) and then analyzing what he has done to provide the rhythmic foundation behind each instrument. Also featured are guest appearances by: Rickie Simpkins on fiddle (Sally Goodin' and Dusty Miller) and mandolin (Big Country and I Wonder Where You Are Tonight), Sammy Shelor on banjo (Ground Speed and Whitewater), Kenny Smith on guitar (Goodbye, Liza Jane and Bill Cheathum) and Tony Rice (Waltz for Indira, Manzanita, and Devlin). Wyatt provides guitar accompaniment to each of these artists and then analyzes the techniques he has employed.

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Audio CD
Tracks 28-30

It Don't Mean A Thing

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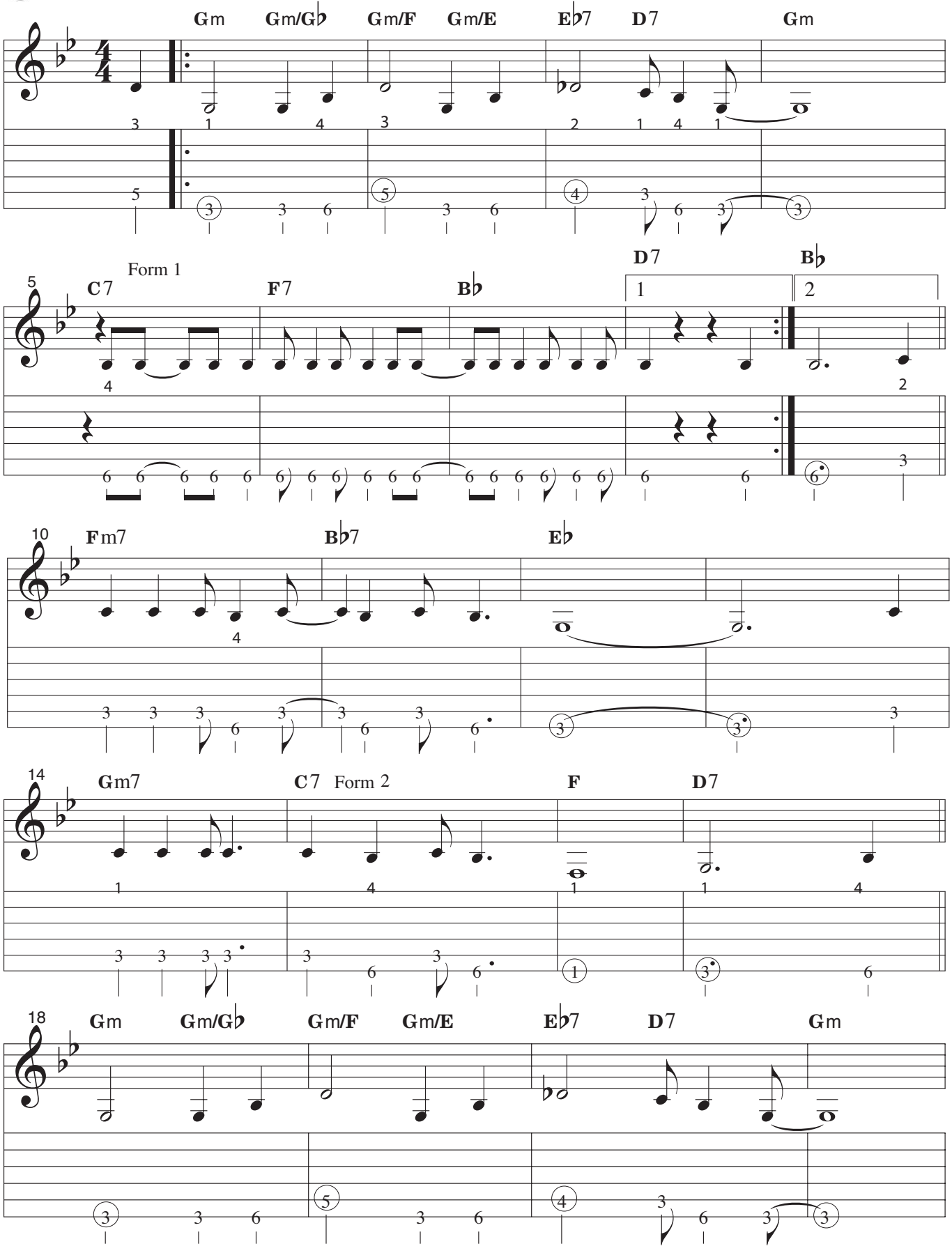
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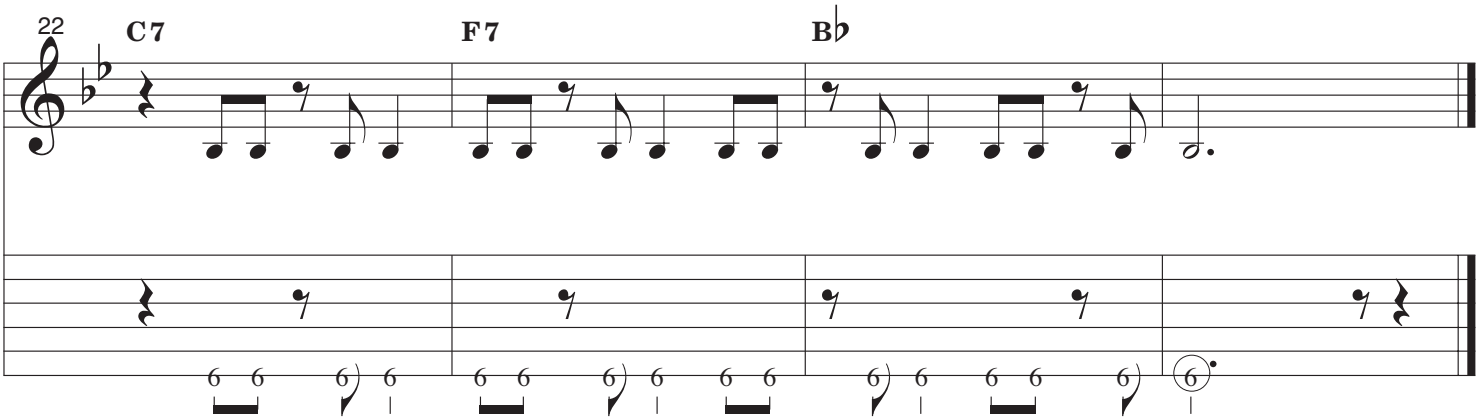
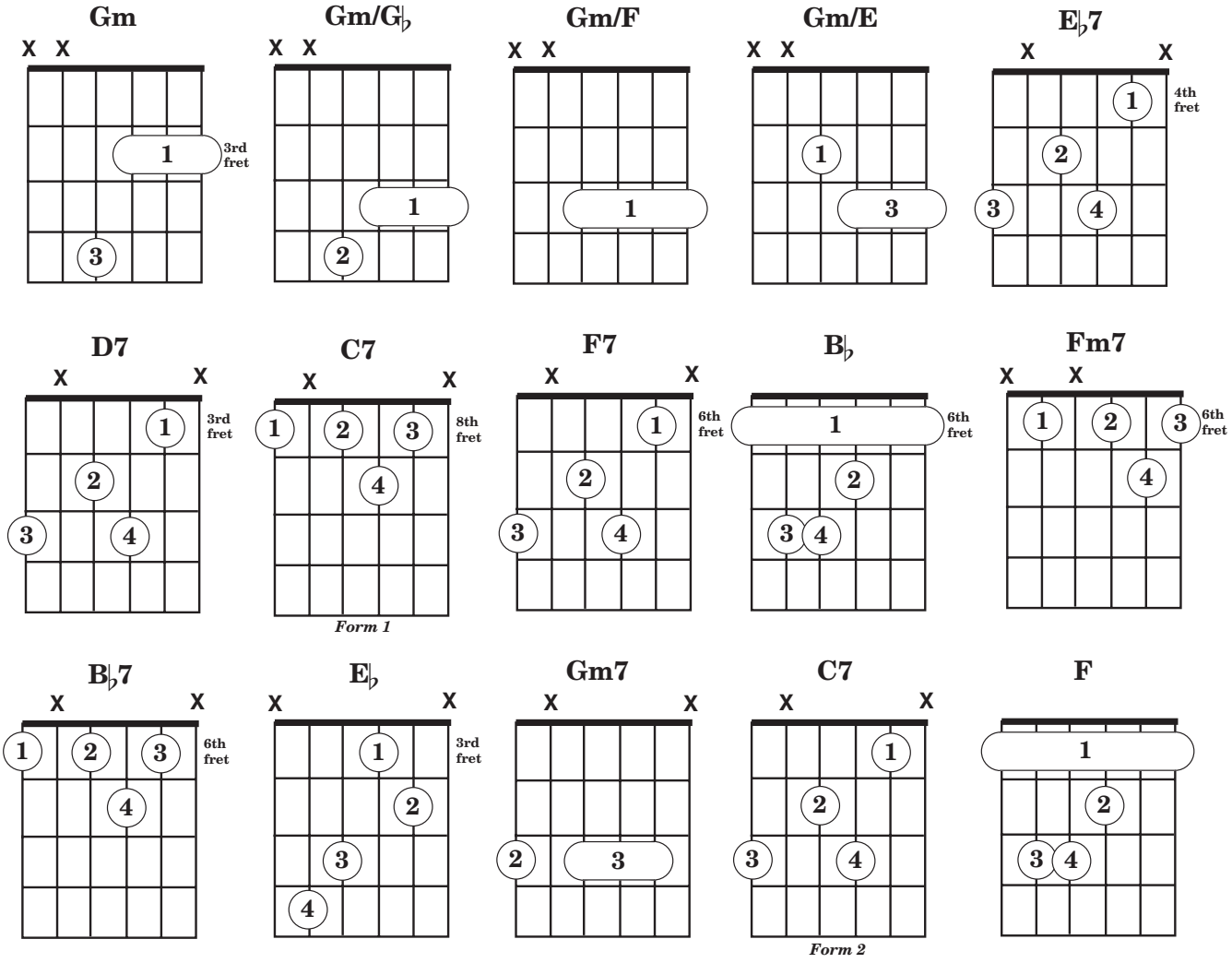

"It Don't Mean A Thing" Chord Forms



Store Visit:

The Mountain Music Shoppe

Shawnee, Kansas

by Dan Miller

In a short eight years Jim Curley has gradually built what started out as a 400-square-foot teaching studio into one of the best acoustic music stores in the Midwest. The Mountain Music Shoppe, located in Shawnee, Kansas, is a 3600-square-foot facility which houses some fine instruments, teaching rooms, a performance venue, and knowledgeable staff. If you are traveling through Kansas City, this is one of the stores you will want to make time to visit.

Jim Curley is a traditional and old-time musician who says that after playing music on the road for years he wanted to do something that would facilitate him spending more time with his family. To that end he started teaching lessons out of his home. As a sideline he also started buying and selling used instruments. Pretty soon teaching at home became distracting when the kids would come home from school, so in November of 1996 he rented a 400-square-foot space where he held his private lessons. Whenever he did not have a lesson, or when he traveled to play music, he would simply hang the "Closed" sign on the door.

As students began asking him where they could get items like picks and strings, Jim decided to start carrying a few of these accessories. After all, it is not that easy to go to the local chain store and buy a set of strings for some of the instruments that Jim was teaching, like hammered and mountain dulcimer. As the amount of merchandise he carried expanded, so did Jim's need for space. In November of 1998 he rented a 900-square-foot building. He added some more instruments to his store's inventory and also began holding "house concerts." He said that he would literally take everything out of the store and squeeze about 30 chairs into "the shack" for concerts and group seminars.

During the years Jim spent as a road musician he said that he would visit stores in places like Branson and Nashville and try to find parts and accessories for the traditional instruments that he played. Typically he found that the people in those stores didn't even know what something like a hammered dulcimer was. In October of 2003, Jim moved in to his current 3600-square-foot store with the mission of specializing in those instruments and musical styles that the big stores did not. He focused on carrying the instruments, instructional material, magazines, and CDs that related to any kind of "roots music," from blues, to bluegrass, to old-time, to rockabilly. He said, "I didn't want to carry anything that you could walk into a big chain store and find."

Regarding new instruments, Jim mainly carries high-end and hand-made banjos, mandolins, fiddles, dulcimers, guitars, resonator guitars, ukes, etc. Some of the brands you might find include Deering, Weber, Summit, Bourgeois, Santa Cruz, Martin, CA, Masterworks, and Lebeda. Jim says, "I have total pride in my brands because I believe in them and their value."

Jim requires his teaching staff to specialize in the instrument that they teach. For instance, if a teacher is a classically trained violinist, but does not know how to play bluegrass or old-time fiddle, he will not allow them to teach fiddle music because it is not their specialty. He does not want teachers who are learning a few pages ahead in the book from the students.

Another great service that Jim provides to the community is his concert/workshop series. Three to four times a month Jim fills his concert venue with a nationally prominent act. He says the list of performers looks like a who's-who of the Homespun tape instructor list. We don't have enough space to mention all of the great players who have performed there, but this list, as well as a performance schedule can be found on Jim's website. One of the most recent performances at Jim's store featured two concerts by Cody Kilby, Brad Davis, and Tim May. *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* was there with video cameras rolling and will be releasing this concert in DVD form later this spring.

Jim's policy is simple: "It is our job to become friends and family with our customers." When you visit the store, you will find that this is indeed the atmosphere there. The Mountain Music Shoppe is located at 12710 Shawnee Mission Parkway, Shawnee, Kansas. You can reach them by calling 913-962-9711 or visiting their website (www.mountainmusicshoppe.com).

Music Theory:
Mastering the Fingerboard
Technical Studies for Flatpickers

by Michel A. Maddux

"There are two kinds of music: good and bad." — Duke Ellington

Rhythm work requires an advanced knowledge of chords as well as connecting runs. Many tunes need to have a more complex tonal structure than the basic first position G-C-D strum. Waltz tunes, "spacegrass" tunes, "Dawg" tunes, and jazz tunes all benefit from the use of advanced chords and chord movement.

This article is an introduction into some of the most useful forms of the "big" chords, that is, jazz chords, where they are used in modern guitar playing, and a classic jazz tune that uses these chords.

Basic Jazz Chords—Up the Neck

Remember that the basic major triad is 1-3-5. An alternative way to play the G major chord in third position is indicated in example 1, below.

Notice that the first chord, the four-note G, has the notes G-G-B-D (or 1-1-3-5), a slight modification of the usual triad formula, but one in which all of the desired notes are present.

The top three notes of this chord are often used alone with crosspicking and soloing, or as a simple "splash" chord.

The full barre chord shown next has the notes G-D-G-B-D-G, with repeated fifth (the D) and the root (G) repeated three times. The use of full barre chords wherein all six strings are played is generally discouraged, as the repeated notes and multiple octaves have a tendency to sound too heavy, and can muddy the sound in a band situation.

The remaining chords presented here are four-note chords, which are the most useful chords for this type of playing.

To use these chords you must be able to quickly and fluently move between them. Practice Exercise 2 in all positions, up and down the fingerboard, to develop the proper fluency. Say the name of the chord as you play it. Strum these chords in the jazz style, using strum, chop, strum, chop. Listen to the recording on the CD for an example of the proper sound. Continue the exercise up and down the fingerboard to the 11th position (or higher if you have a cutaway).

Do the same thing for the root on the 5th string chords, C, CM7, CM6, up and down the neck. If these chords seem hard to play at first, just keep practicing them in all positions. They will get easier.

Jazz Chords - Altered and Extended

We have already seen two examples of altered and extended chords: the 7th is an extension of the basic triad, and the 6th is an alteration.

The next thing to include in our system of chords and their use is to alter the chords by including a sharp fifth, and extend the chords to include a 9th and 13th. These chords may seem formidable at first, but they are commonly used in acoustic music. Remember the formula: the 9-11-13 chords use the 2-4-6 intervals, an octave higher. All of these chords are closed position chords, playable in every position. Practice them in the same way that you did the first exercise, up and down the neck, saying the name of the chord as you play it. A great standard reference for this type of playing is the *Mickey Baker Jazz Guitar Book, Volume I.*

Play the two scales shown to gain fluency in Eb; the 7 major scale fingerings were presented in my column in an earlier issue of FGM. For additional fluency in alternate positions, experiment with the other five scale forms. Note that in exercise 4, you shift positions from 8th to 7th and back again on the ascending portion. On the descending portion, stretch to reach the 13th fret with your little finger while remaining in 8th position.

About the Tune: "Four"

The tune presented today is a jazz combo standard from the great bebop trumpeter Miles Davis. This tune is easy to play in the flatpicking style. Not only does it make a great addition to the acoustic string player's library, but it's a standard with horn players. You can sit in with any jazz combo and they will know it. Like most jazz combo tunes, this one has a basic "head" (that is, the melody is followed by improv sections).

Play the head once, improvise over the changes, restate the head, and out.

The tune is in the key of Eb. Warm up a bit with the Eb major scales in 3rd and 10th position (root on the 5th string and root on the 6th string).

Listen to the CD to get the feel right. Notice that the last two measures of the 2nd ending are rests; that is where the band stops and the soloist gets a chance to play two measures of improvisation to lead back into the changes. Do that only after stating the head the first time.

That's all for now... have fun, and keep on pickin'!

Mike plays several styles of music, including classical, jazz, bluegrass, Irish styles, and his own style, "grassology." He lives in the mountains of Colorado. You can drop him a line via the website: www.madduxband.com. Be certain to mention FGM in the title.

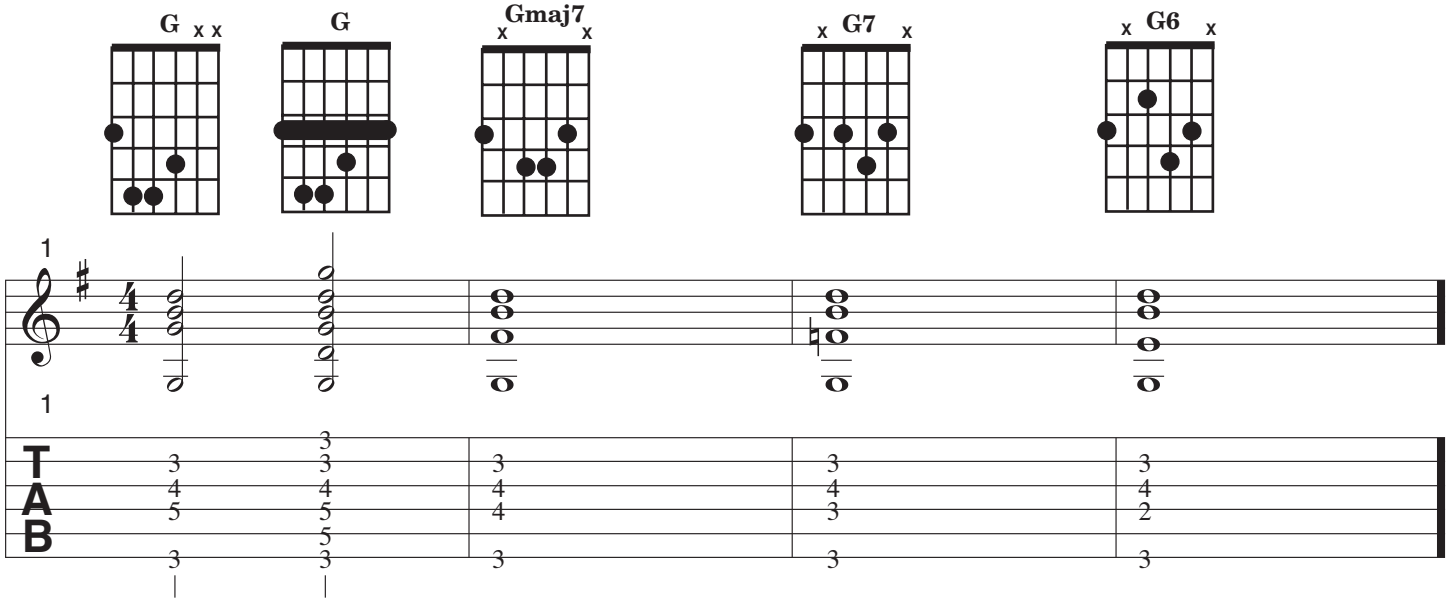
Tim May

Find My Way Back
www.fgmrecords.com

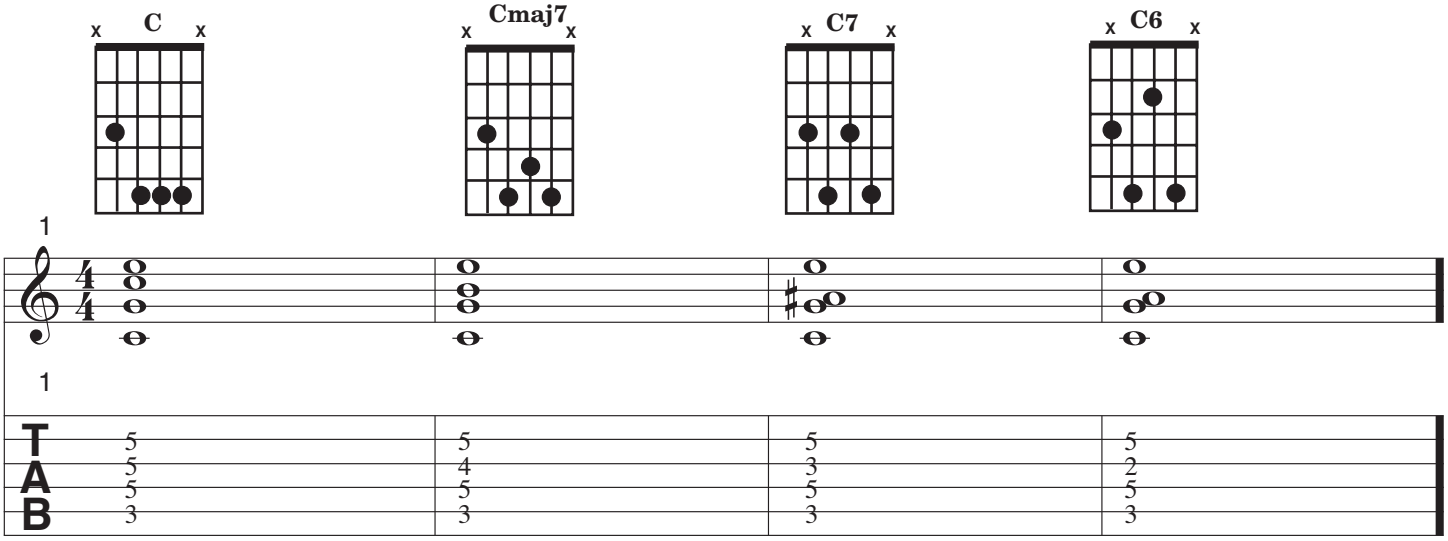
Maddux Exercises & Examples

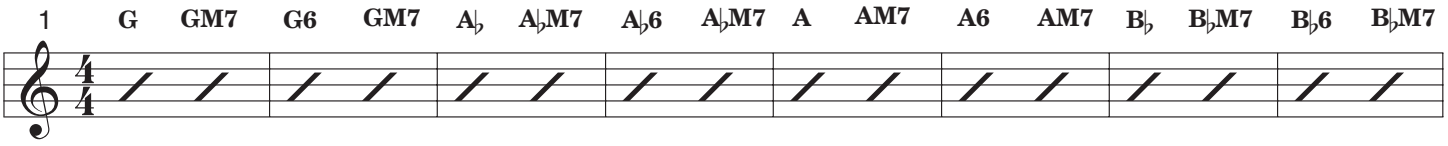
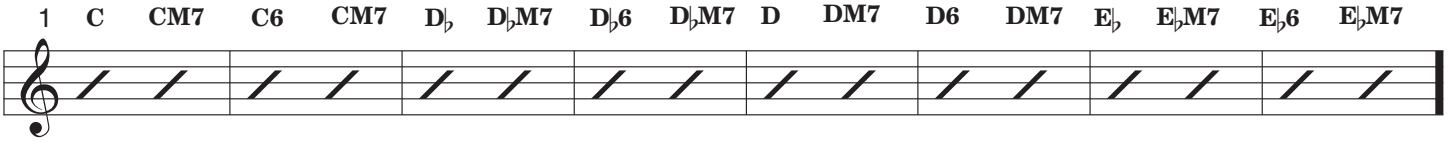
Audio CD
Track 32-37

Example I



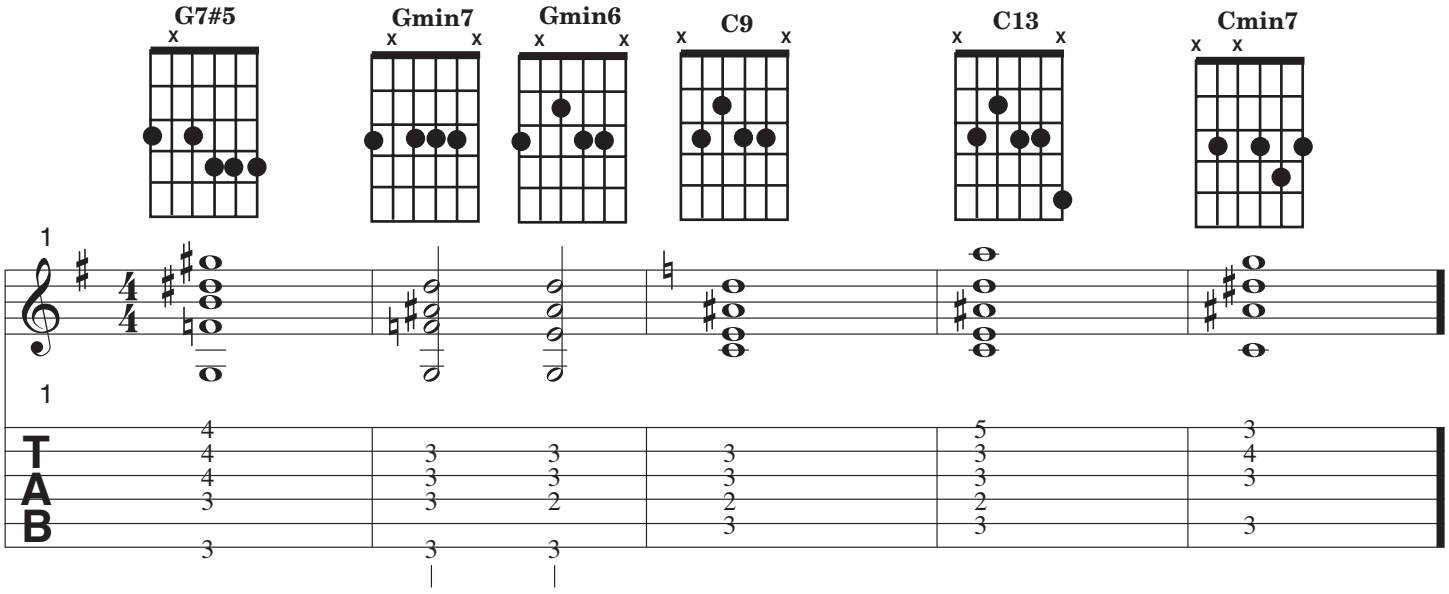
Example II



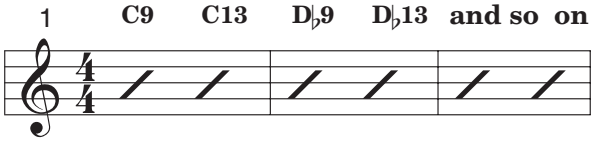
Exercise I

Exercise II

/ = Strum + Chop

Maddux Exercises & Examples (con't)

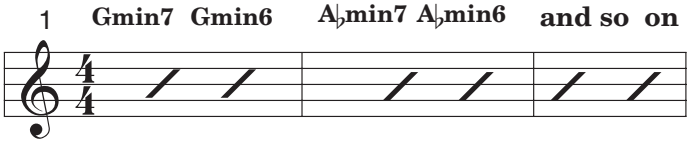
Example III



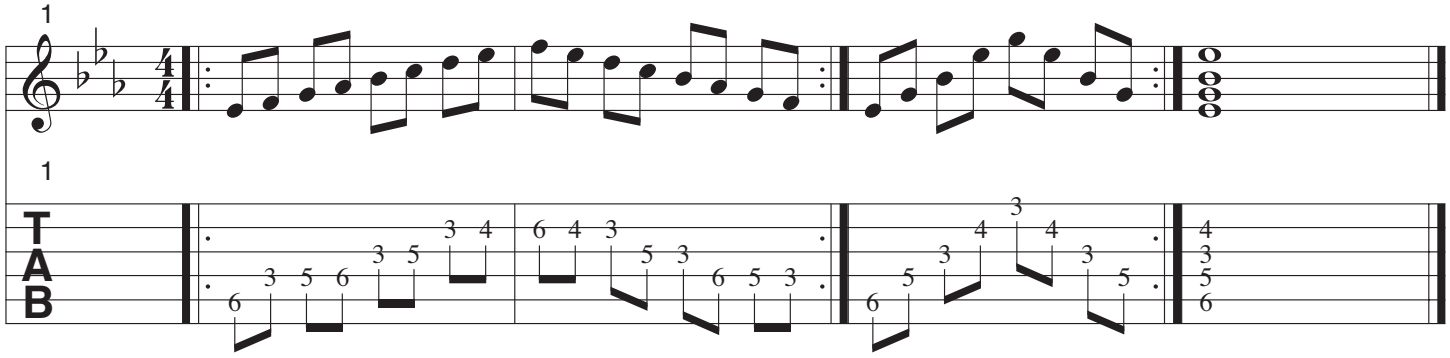
Exercise III



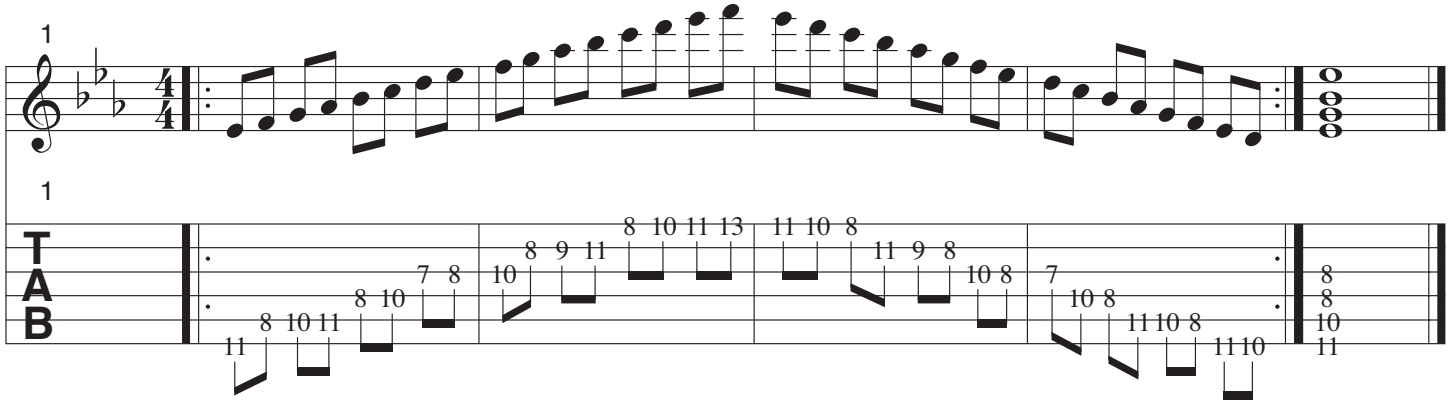
Exercise IV



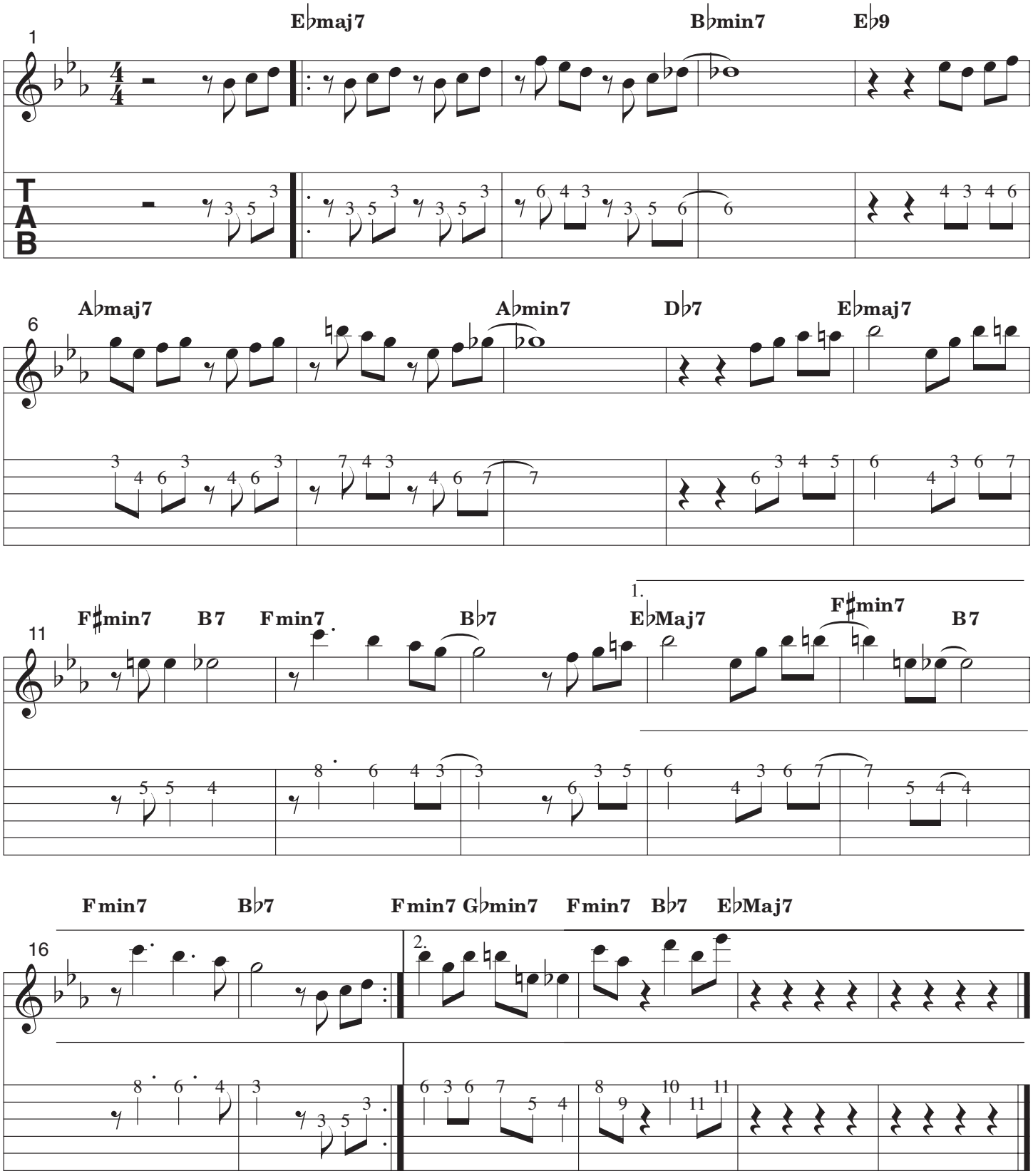
Exercise V - E♭ Major Scales



Exercise VI - E♭ Major Scales in 8th Position



Four

Audio CD
Track 38-39

Gospel Guitar

with Harold Streeter

Chord/Melody Style

Many of the songs appearing in this column over the years have been arranged in what is commonly known as "chord/melody style." In response to the folks who've written in to inquire how they might also go about making up their own arrangements in the style, this column marks the beginning of a series on that topic.

Chord/melody style may be thought of as an approach involving the playing of melody notes which are surrounded and/or combined with chords. Without too much of a stretch, that definition also applies to other flatpick styles such as crosspicking, a style that frequently involves holding chord forms and playing the notes of chords one at a time. However, the term "chord/melody style" is usually reserved for situations in which melody notes are played in registers high enough to insure that chords of lower pitch can be placed under them.

That's exactly where we'll be headed in future columns, but this time we're going to take a look at another style that fits the chord/melody definition: Carter style. Here, the idea is just the opposite; to place melody notes in registers which are low enough to insure that chords of higher pitch can be placed over them.

It's probably no secret to most *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* readers that Carter style is named for Maybelle Carter of the Carter Family. Interestingly enough, Maybelle wasn't a flatpicker. Before she learned to play guitar, she played banjo, and her guitar style evolved out of the banjo style she learned from her mother. The result was a style that allowed her to play both melodies and rhythm at the same time. It was an approach in which she played bass notes with a thumb pick, a mixture of melody notes and fill runs, and chord strums with her index finger.

For some time prior to the Carter Family's recordings, black musicians had played melodies and rhythm at the same time in fingerstyle, with some styles dating back to before the Civil War. The most notable of these was Piedmont style, which later evolved into Travis picking. When the Carter Family exploded on the scene in the late 1920s with their recordings, however, black musicians weren't being widely recorded. In terms of styles providing melodies and rhythm simultaneously, therefore, Maybelle's style was the first to be heard by a large audience, one which included a lot of guitarists who were said to be scrambling to figure out how she did it.

All that aside, these days, Carter style is usually played with a flatpick. The first and most basic building blocks of Carter style are strum patterns, the kind we usually play for backup. The first measure in the first tab example here is such a pattern, consisting of bass notes alternating with strums. The second measure is of the same pattern, except that up strokes on the first string have been added immediately following the strums. The up strokes almost qualify the measure as an example of Carter style. After a couple of listens to Maybelle's playing, however, it becomes evident that hammers and pulls are integral to her style. With that in mind, the inclusion of the hammer in the third measure provides a good example of what Carter style is all about.

Following the G chord examples is the same sort of thing for a C chord. Here we evolve from the basic pattern in the first measure, through up stroke additions in the second measure, to hammers in the third measure - two of them this time.

To put all this to use in playing a melody in Carter style, the next example is of the first half of "Wildwood Flower," in order to show the evolution of a basic melody to the real deal. Granted, this isn't a gospel song, but it's one which most of us are familiar with. First recorded on May 10th, 1928 in Camden, New Jersey by the Carter family, "Wildwood Flower" is said to be the recording that led to all the aforementioned scrambling by guitarists attempting to determine the essence of Maybelle's style.

The first section in the example is of the basic melody, as it is sung. In the next section, strum fills have been added following melody notes having a value of more than one beat. The addition of the strums allowed Maybelle to keep the beat going, so as to have her guitar function as both a lead and rhythm instrument. In the last section, a couple of hammers and two single-note fills have been added, with the second being one of Maybelle's signature tag licks. The result is an official Carter style treatment, although not exactly as Maybelle recorded it.

Next, in order to put all of that to work in a gospel song (one that's appeared in a previous issue of FGM, although not in this column), is "Will the Circle Be Unbroken." Originally called "Can the Circle Be Unbroken," it was recorded by the Carter family on May 5th, 1935 in New York City.

The first half of the tab is arranged in Carter style, ending on the first note of measure 17. As with "Wildwood Flower," here you'll see all of the elements which constitute Carter style in action. In addition to three hammer-ons and a pull-off, notice that some of the strums scattered throughout are followed by up strokes on the first string and some aren't. Such up strokes are optional, and a suggestion is to experiment with them and decide for yourself which ones are worth retaining. Conversely, where strums in the tab are not followed by up-strokes, include them and see what you think. It's really up to you, and it's the kind of thing which is supposed to happen spontaneously.

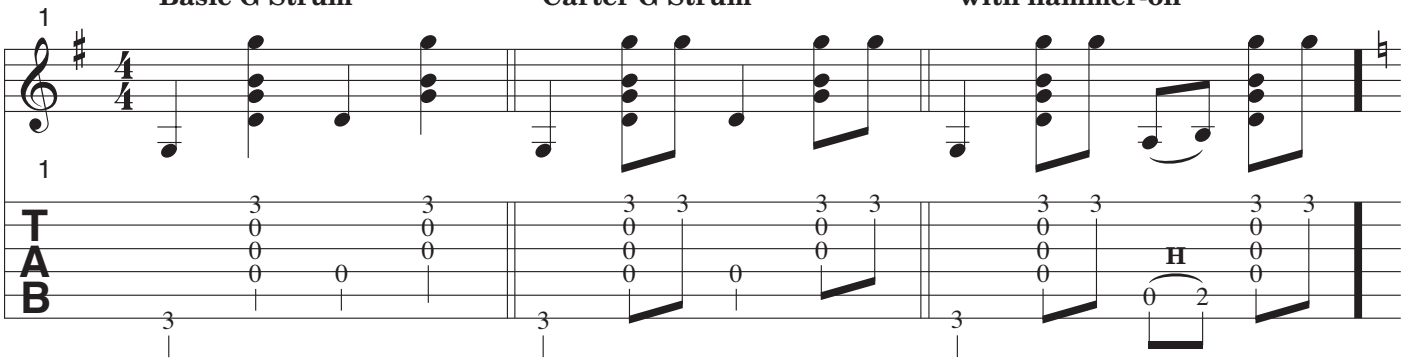
The second half of the tab on the other hand includes some Carter style, but for the most part, its main features are crosspicking, double stops, and a little blues flavoring here and there, which "Circle" fully supports. There's no need to learn this part, however. Just end on the first note of measure 17 and you'll have the whole song.

The next Gospel Guitar column will focus on chord/melody style in the manner in which it's usually regarded. As mentioned near the beginning of this column, that means placing melody notes in higher registers so that chords of lower pitch can be placed under them. In the process, we'll be taking an ancient hymn called "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" for a spin.

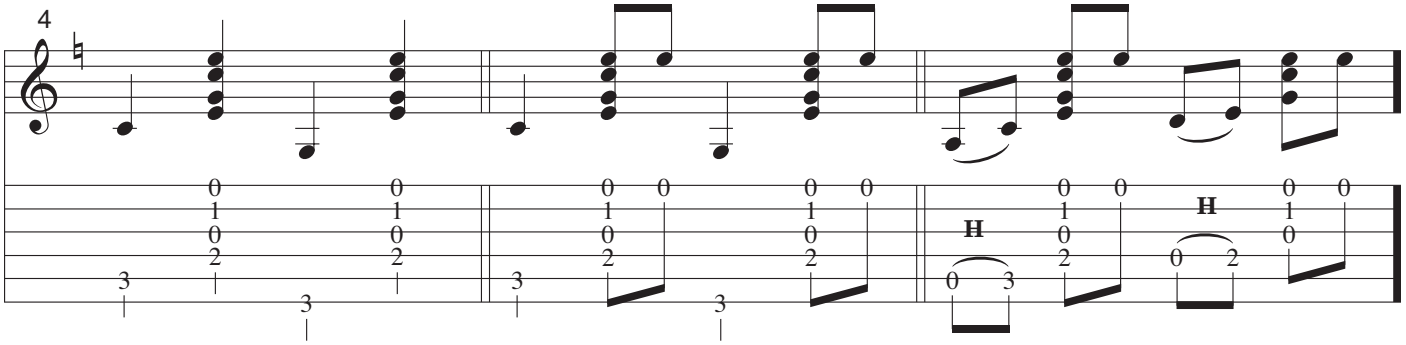
As always, send me your ideas for songs to include in this column, and please pay us a visit at www.lewalt.com.

Audio CD
Track 40

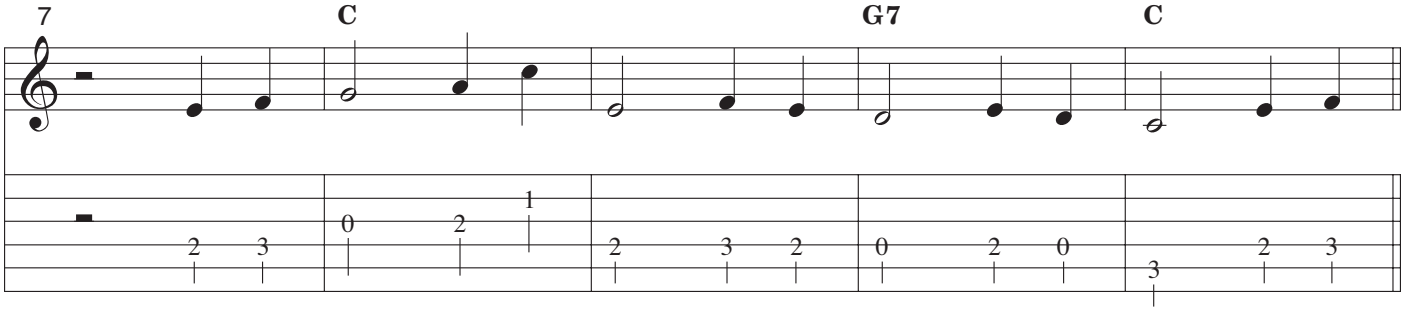
Basic G Strum **Carter G Strum** **with hammer-on**



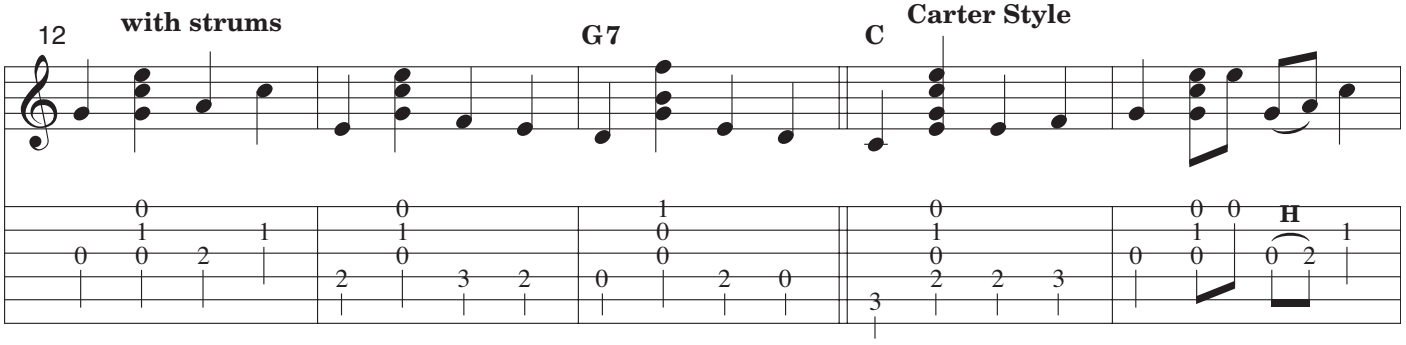
Basic C Strum **Carter C Strum** **with hammer-ons**

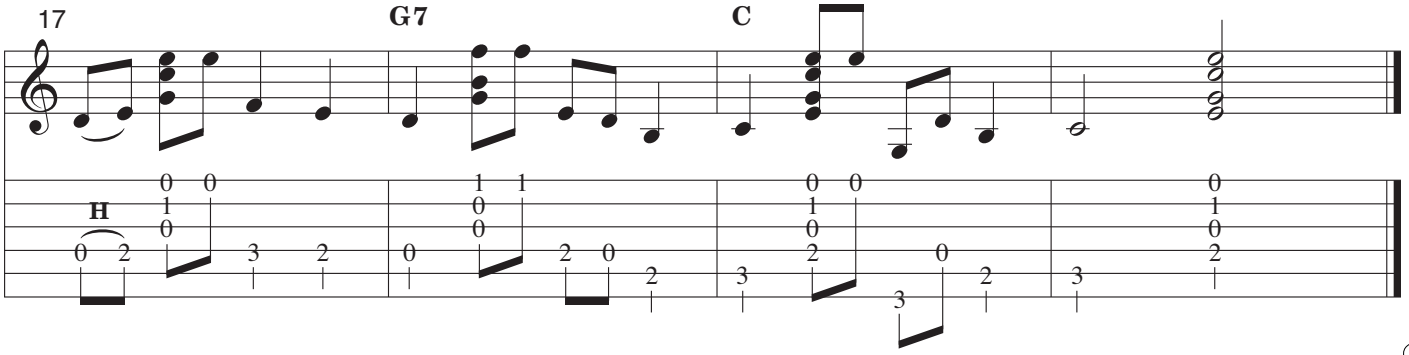


Wildwood Flower - basic melody



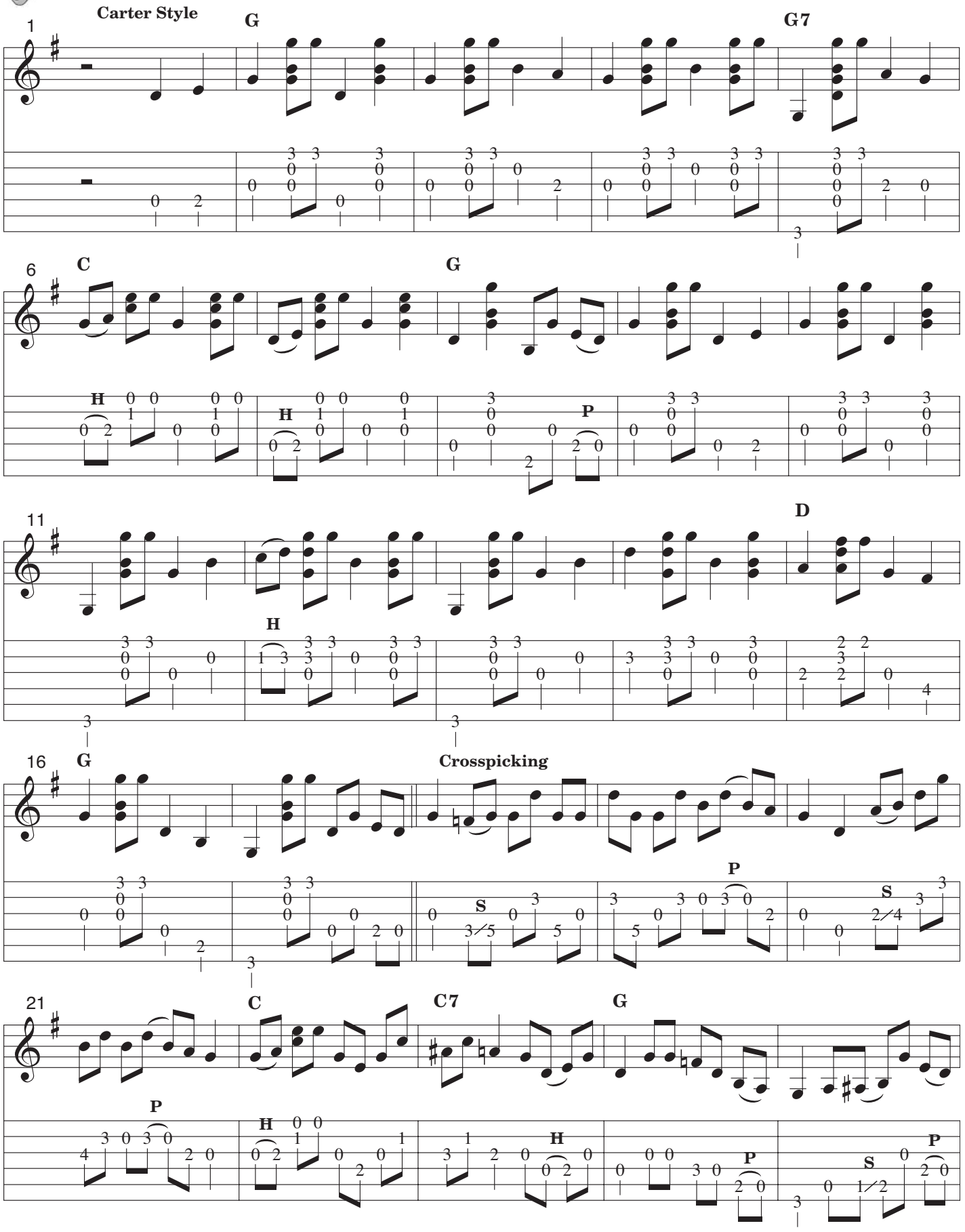
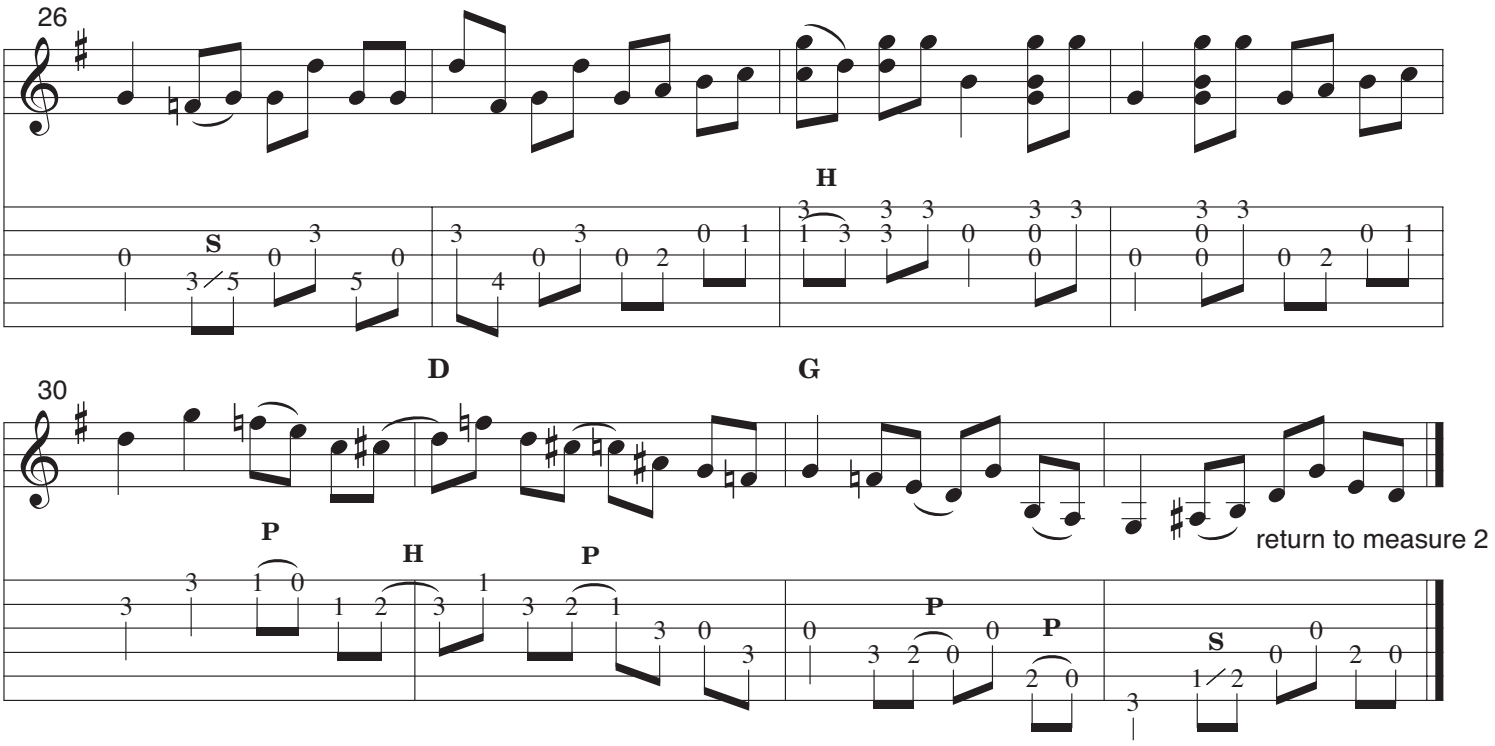
with strums **Carter Style**





Audio CD
Track 41-42

Will The Circle Be Unbroken

Arranged by Harold Streeter

Will The Circle Be Unbroken (con't)

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Columnist Profile:
Harold Streeter

by Dan Miller

Editor's note: Back during our first year of publication we started a "Columnist Profile" series of articles that gave our readers background information on the individuals who had regular columns in the magazine. These articles focused more on biographical information than teaching information. I assumed that the teaching would be presented in each contributor's bi-monthly column and thus the "Columnist Profile" was simply a way for readers to learn more about the people they were learning from in each issue. Harold Streeter joined the ranks of our contributors after that series of articles had ended and to date we have never printed an article about Harold. We are going to fix that in this issue by letting you know a little about the man who brings you the "Gospel Guitar" column in each issue.

A native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Harold Streeter got his first guitar in 1955. He was eleven years old. He said, "My brother and I were equally interested in bluegrass. As he was five years older, our parents got him a nice guitar and I got a $20.00 clunker Kay that developed a set of calluses in a hurry, because my parents didn't think I'd take to it, being involved in sports, etc. As it turned out, I became obsessed with all forms of music, trying to learn anything that came my way."

Harold began his study of the guitar by trying to figure out the Carter style on his own. He struggled by himself until a teacher named John Voit showed him how to play "Wildwood Flower" and a few Duane Eddy instrumentals. Harold remembers, "My musical education was kind of hit and miss, consisting of picking up tips here and there at jams and so forth, until I met Bill Monroe."

Harold was able to get close to Bill Monroe because Harold's brother had married the daughter of Monroe's first booking agent. When Monroe and the band came to perform in Minneapolis, Harold had the opportunity to meet Monroe and hang out with the band. He even became friends with a few members of the band and would occasionally travel to Nashville to study and play music with them.

Harold recalls, "Bill began teaching me a few things on his hard-to-play, high-action Gibson mandolin. In those days, Joe Stuart was in the group. Joe, who was an excellent fiddler, banjo player, and guitar player, taught me a few flatpicking things on the fly backstage, and later on, in Nashville, taught me a lot about Scruggs style banjo. Tony Ellis was another banjo player with Bill at the time who taught me a lot of things."

Harold continued, "For guitar, I'm forever indebted to Kenny Baker. Some time before becoming Bill's long-time fiddle player, Kenny played guitar for Spade Cooley's swing group, and was equally adept at flatpicking and fingerstyle. He taught me a lot about Texas swing and jazz playing, and straightened me out on a few Chet Atkins pieces I was trying to learn. Also, about this time, I met a jazz bassist who used to perform with Johnny Smith, the legendary jazz guitarist. His name was Jack Snyder and we met at his house a few times to go over music theory concepts, including structuring chord voicings, which all led to chord/melody playing."

Harold said that his two biggest influences on the guitar were Chet Atkins and Johnny Smith. Additionally, Doc Watson became an early influence after Harold got to see Doc perform with Clarence Ashley in 1962. He said, "I can't remember how much time was spent with their recordings, trying to educate myself on playing single lines and chord structures." Learning from recordings was the way he also studied the banjo styles of Earl Scruggs, Don Reno, and Ralph Stanley.

Bill Monroe must have liked what he heard in Harold's banjo playing because he

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began to let Harold sit in with the band when he was performing in Minneapolis, and later offered him a full time job. Harold explains, "Shortly after Bill Monroe started coming to town, I began playing banjo for him—not on the road, but just in Minneapolis. Sometime in '63, he called me up to go on the road with him. A year out of high school, I had a rock band at the time with lots of bookings and was working a day job as a commercial artist. I turned him down, explaining that it wouldn't be right to leave the other band members in the lurch, and he never spoke to me again."

Regarding his rock band, Harold said, "This particular rock band was named [red face here] the Galaxies, and we toured the country backing up the rock stars of the day. Booking out of the Ed Sullivan agency, we were set to go on the Ed Sullivan show, but never got on, because the Beatles hit and went on instead. Our organist, Kevin Murphy, loved being on the road and went on to form Rufus with Chaka Khan. After playing many strings of one-nighters 400 miles apart, however, the rest of us got burned out on traveling (still true for me to this day) and we disbanded."

After the rock group broke up, Harold decided to get out of the music business and spent 13 years (1965 to 1978) designing logic and circuit boards back in the days of the "dinosaur mainframes." But after working with circuit boards for about ten years Harold "longed to get back in music," so he started writing instructional material in 1974.

Harold has taught private lessons on the guitar, 5-string banjo, mandolin, Dobro, and bass in Minnesota, Texas, Arizona, Washington, and Idaho. Additionally, he has taught at various camps and workshops in the western United States and Canada. He has authored numerous books for guitar, banjo, and mandolin, and has been a columnist for *Bluegrass Canada*, *Flatpicking Guitar*, and *Banjo Newsletter*. He has also contributed to *Frets* and *Acoustic Guitar* magazines.In the studio, Harold has arranged and recorded documentary film sound tracks, national radio and TV commercials, approximately 2000 instructional recordings, and various guitar solos for the "easy listening" market which were released into national FM radio syndication through Churchill Productions. Several guitar albums have been released to date: *String Styles of Harold Streeter*, *Beautiful, Guitarscapes, Streets of Laredo*, and *Sent Forth By God's Blessing*. He is currently working on a Latin guitar album, scheduled for release next year.

Harold's career as a performer has included performances as a concert guitar soloist and as a string musician in rock, jazz, bluegrass, and country bands, including performing with such artists as Bobby Vinton, Lenny Welch, Dee Dee Sharp, Jimmy Clanton, and Bill Monroe, and three years performing with the Sons of the Golden West (1988-1990). He performed with the Chad Mitchell Trio, Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, Eric Weissburg, Josh White, Jr., and Burl Ives at historic concert in New York City in 1993. He has also been a member of the 6-piece Riders of the Rockin' B, performing traditional western (Sons of the Pioneers, etc), Texas swing, and bluegrass on guitar, banjo and mandolin in the Pacific Northwest since 1998.

In addition to performing and teaching, Harold also had some involvement in the songwriting business back in the 70's. He says, "I had a couple minor hits; "Little Country Store" and "Come First Thing in the Morning". One of the guys in our company was Gordy Steele of Toronto, Canada—an early (but minor-role producer of *Hee-Haw*). We had an office just off Music Row in Nashville, and our main song pusher (he'd take my songs around to the studios and A & R people) was Tommy Jennings, Waylon's brother."

After his fifty year involvement in teaching, performing, songwriting, and recording acoustic music, I'd say that Harold Streeter is well qualified to be our "Gospel Guitar" columnist. We are lucky to have him and look forward to many more years of great music and instruction from Harold.

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2) Send a CD with your tune to the *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* office (see the table of contents page for this address) by October 30th, 2005. Make the package "Flatpick Duo Contest." You can submit as many tunes as you would like with the same, or different, partners. However, each tune must be on a separate disc.
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4) Questions? Email: dan@flatpick.com

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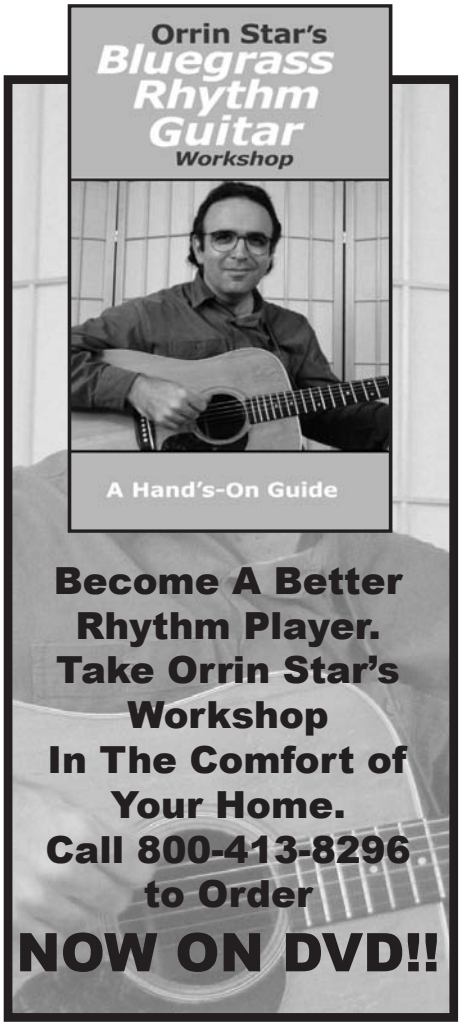

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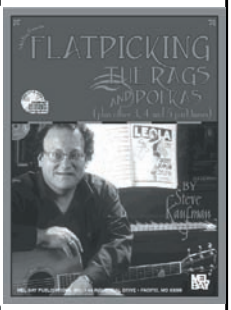

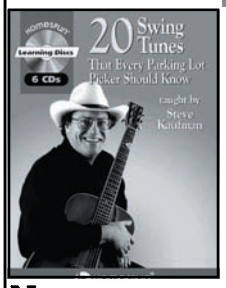

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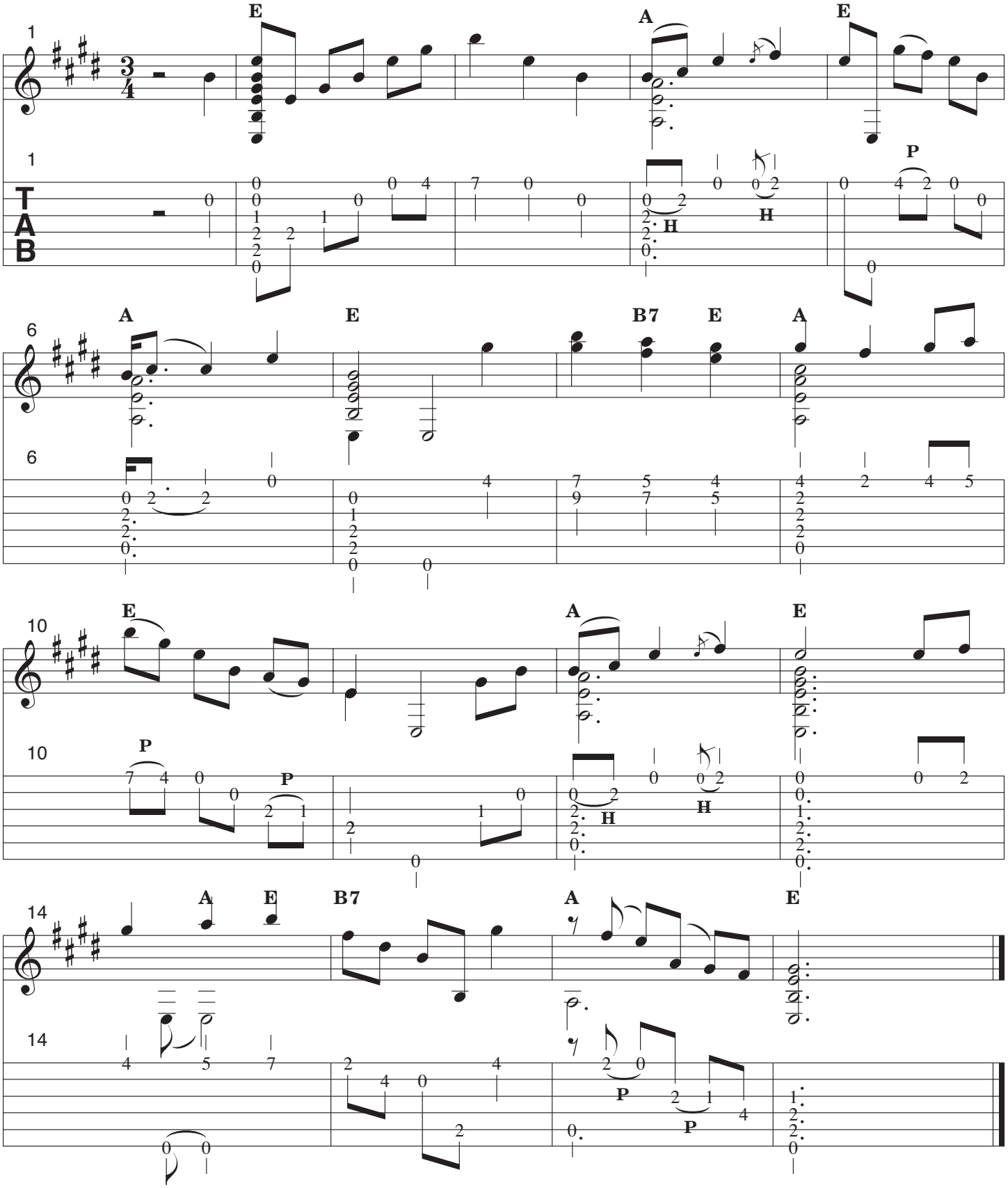
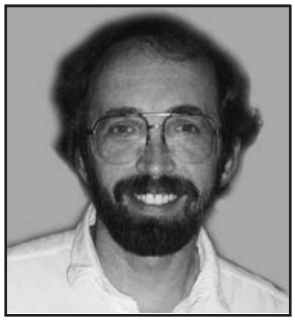
Prairie Sunset

Arranged by Bill Bay

Exploring Bluegrass Guitar

Crazy Creek

by Steve Pottier



"Crazy Creek" is an interesting tune. First, it has an unusual chord progression. It is in the key of A and uses a C chord in the first part. Then it goes to the key of C for the bridge! The second interesting thing is that it changes chords on almost every beat in the first part, making it a challenge akin to "Blackberry Blossom."

I heard Clarence White's version on a lesson tape he made for someone, and it caught my ear. He plays it out of open A. How do I know that? Two clues—the opening run starts on a low E note and walks up to the A. Unless you are capoed with a drop D, it has to be open to get that E note. Second clue is the slide to the E note on the first string. You can hear the characteristic open string ring telling you it's going to an open E. This pretty much clinches the fact that it is played in open A. Actually, it works out pretty good to play it in A since the unusual chord is a C. If the tune were played out of a G position, you would be going to Bb and Eb in the bridge—why be hard on yourself?

One of the big challenges of this tune is to preserve the integrity of the chord progression. This means that whenever you change chords, you try to land on one of the notes of the chord on the first downbeat. For an A chord, those notes are A, C#, and E. For a D chord those notes are D, F#, and A. For a C chord, those notes are C, E, and G. For most of the tune, you'll find that Clarence's break follows that guideline. You should also examine "Blackberry Blossom" for the same feature. I once composed a break to BBB by going up instead of down (scale wise, not pick direction). I just decided to follow the rule that I had to land on chord tones. It wasn't an earth-shaking break, but it worked reasonably well. But back to Clarence's break—there are a couple of exceptions to the rule. Why do they work (hint—look at the surrounding notes, and for notes that are wrong, see if they are closely related to the chord)?

The tune is in the form AABA (form, not chords), so the first part is repeated. The bridge goes off into another key, starting on an F chord!! It's not the first thing that would come to my mind. Anyway, this part is cross-picked. In M18 Clarence leaves out a couple of notes—I like that, it just makes it more interesting. The last part is a repeat of the first part, but I added one of Clarence's variations, M26-27. M26 has a signature pull-off and anticipated C note.

Good luck, and enjoy playing this unusual tune!

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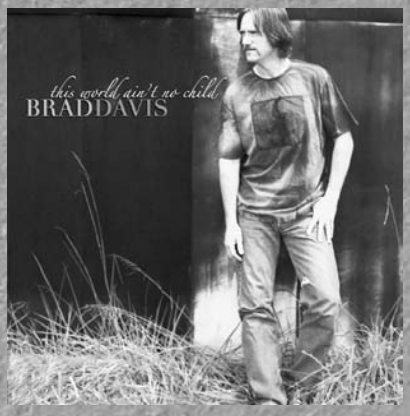
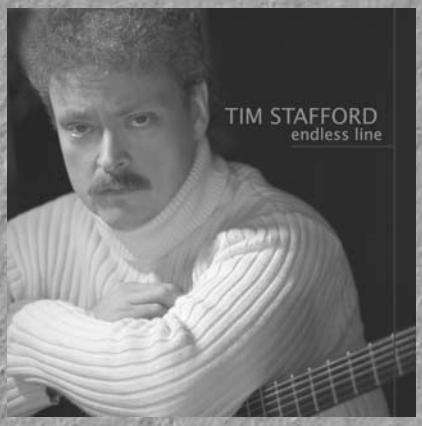


This World Ain't No Child

Tim Stafford



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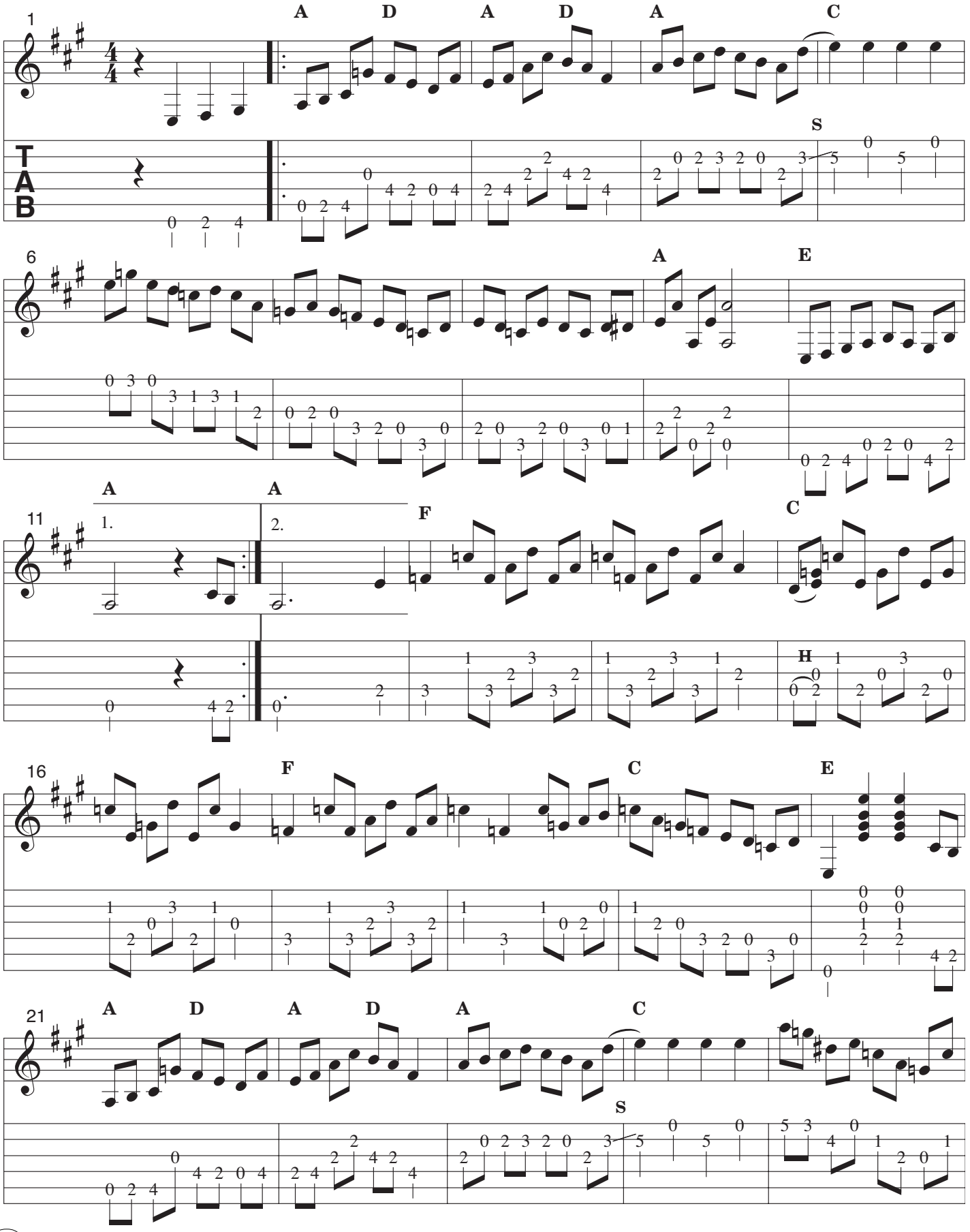
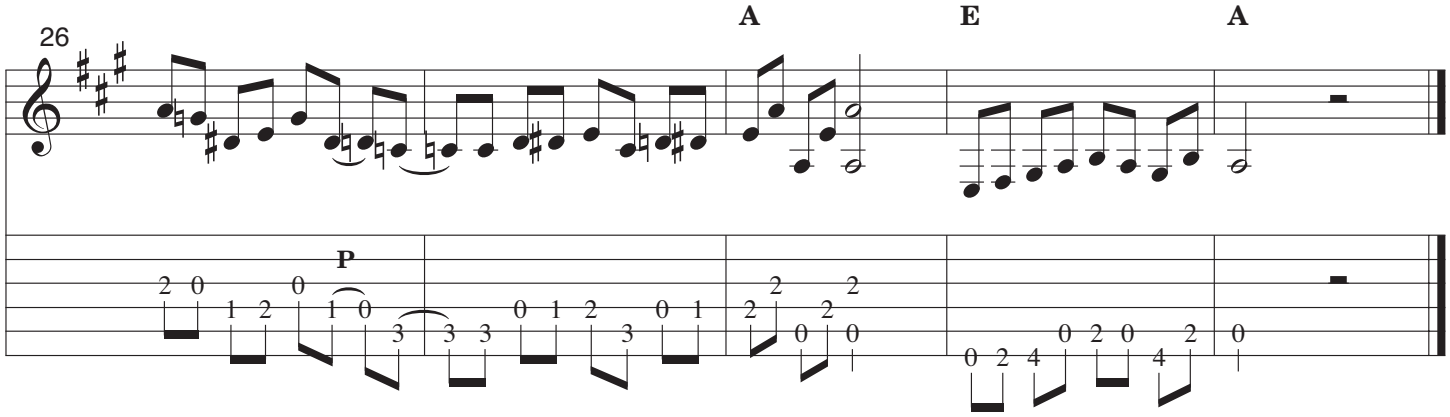

Crazy Creek (con't)

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PICKIN' FIDDLE TUNES
by Adam Granger

OUR LOCAL PICKING LIST

Hi, everyone. No time for chitchat; let's get right to work. You will doubtless recall that two issues ago I devoted my column to a list and discussion of the fifteen commonest flatpick fiddle tunes. I represented these as being flatpicked pretty much anywhere flatpickers flatpick.

This time, I present a typical local picking list—ours, here in the twin cities of St Paul and Minneapolis. We'll discuss the tunes on this list and the concepts of such lists, turn the list upside down and inside out, and then end with an entertaining and useful statistical analysis.

First, let's set the scene: The Twin Cities have what would have to be called a robust flatpick scene: There are probably forty or fifty reasonably serious pickers. There are three scheduled, public flatpick jams a week, and another dozen bluegrass and old-time jams. There is the large and well-organized Minnesota Bluegrass and Old Time Music Association (MBOTMA), and stores that cater to us: The Homestead Pickin' Parlor, The Podium and Willie's American Guitars. Hoffman Guitars and Olson Guitars are made here. A number of noted pickers live here: Dakota Dave Hull, Bill Cagley, Peter Ostroushko, Pat Donohue, Chris Silver and, I hear, Adam Granger. *A Prairie Home Companion*, which often features pickers, is based here. There are few better places for pickers, as long as they have warm gloves.

So, out of this environment came the following list of forty tunes: Paul's Popular Picking List. It was compiled in 2000 by local picker Paul Hatch as an aid to pickers both new and new to the group. He handed off his original list of about 30 to our local Flatpick Ambassador, Tony Anthonisen, who added more titles. The list is composed primarily of common tunes, but includes a few of Paul's and Tony's personal favorites and a few recommendations from local flatpick teachers. It is idiosyncratic, incomplete, quirky and subjective: in short, everything you'd want in a local picking list. Let's take a look at the list, first shown alphabetically:

READING *EASYTAB*

Easytab is like conventional tablature, except that timing notation has been streamlined and simplified. Since fiddle tunes are comprised mainly of eighth notes, *Easytab* uses the eighth note as its basic unit. An eighth rest is indicated by a dot. Therefore, a note with a dot after it is a quarter note, and a note with three dots after it is a half note. There are a total of eight notes and rests per measure.

FOR BEGINNERS

Pick with an alternating style: down-up-down-up-down-up etc. The first note of each measure should be a downstroke, the last an upstroke. **Include rests** in this alternating pattern. This keeps you "in sync", playing downstrokes on the beats, so that, no matter what the configuration of notes and rests in an eight-unit measure, the right hand plays them down-up-down-up-down-up-down-up.

PAUL'S POPULAR PICKING LIST

1. **Arkansas Traveler**
2. **Beaumont Rag**
3. **Big Sandy River**
4. **Bill Cheatham**
5. **Billy in the Low Ground**
6. **Black Mountain Rag**
7. **Blackberry Blossom**
8. **Cherokee Shuffle**
9. **Cripple Creek**
10. **Cuckoo's Nest**
11. **Devil's Dream**
12. **Dixie Hoedown**
13. **Fisher's Hornpipe**
14. **Flop-Eared Mule**
15. **Flowers of Edinborough**
16. **Foggy Mountain Special**
17. **Forked Deer**
18. **Girl I Left behind Me**
19. **Gold Rush**
20. **June Apple**
21. **Kitchen Girl**
22. **Leather Britches**
23. **Liberty**
24. **Old Joe Clark**
25. **Over the Waterfall**
26. **President Garfield's Hnpe**
27. **President Grant's Hnpe**
28. **Ragtime Annie**
29. **Red-Haired Boy**
30. **Red Wing**
31. **Sailor's Hornpipe**
32. **St Anne's Reel**
33. **Sally Goodin**
34. **Salt Creek**
35. **Soldier's Joy**
36. **Temperance Reel**
37. **Turkey in the Straw**
38. **Uncle Joe**
39. **Whiskey before Breakfast**
40. **Wildwood Flower**

For his presentation, Tony organized the same tunes into three priority groups, based both on the commonness of the tunes and the level of difficulty, with the first group being the easiest and most common. The result was this:

TONY ANTHONISEN'S PRIORITIZED VERSION

First Group

1. Cherokee Shuffle
2. Cuckoo's Nest
3. Girl I Left behind Me
4. Liberty
5. Old Joe Clark
6. Over the Waterfall
7. Red-Haired Boy
8. Red Wing
9. St Anne's Reel
10. Soldier's Joy

Second Group

11. Arkansas Traveler
12. Bill Cheatham
13. Billy in the Low Ground
14. Forked Deer
15. June Apple
16. Sailor's Hornpipe
17. Salt Creek
18. Temperance Reel
19. Turkey in the Straw
20. Whiskey before Breakfast

Third Group

21. Beaumont Rag
22. Big Sandy River
23. Black Mountain Rag
24. Blackberry Blossom
25. Cripple Creek
26. Devil's Dream
27. Dixie Hoedowqn
28. Fisher's Hornpipe
29. Flop-Eared Mule
30. Flowers of Edinborough
31. Foggy Mountain Special
32. Gold Rush
33. Kitchen Girl
34. Leather Britches
35. President Garfield's Hornpipe
36. President Grant's Hornpipe
37. Ragtime Annie
38. Sally Goodin
39. Uncle Joe
40. Wildwood Flower

Now, here's my categorization of the forty tunes on the list, based solely on commonness. The first section contains all fifteen of the tunes also found in my above-cited column. The second is comprised of another fifteen or so tunes which are fairly logical choices and which will be found on many local lists (tunes like *Over the Waterfall* and *Sailor's Hornpipe*), and the third group, well. . .we'll talk more in a moment about the third group.

SECTION ONE: TUNES THAT WILL BE FOUND ON PRETTY MUCH EVERYONE'S LIST

1. Arkansas Traveler
2. Big Sandy River
3. Bill Cheatham
4. Billy in the Low Ground
5. Blackberry Blossom
6. Forked Deer
7. Gold Rush
8. June Apple
9. Liberty
10. Ragtime Annie
11. Red-Haired Boy
12. St Anne's Reel
13. Salt Creek
14. Soldier's Joy
15. Whiskey before Breakfast

SECTION TWO: TUNES THAT PEOPLE WHO KNOW THIRTY OR FORTY TUNES USUALLY KNOW

1. Beaumont Rag
2. Black Mountain Rag
3. Cherokee Shuffle
4. Cripple Creek
5. Cuckoo's Nest
6. Devil's Dream
7. Fisher's Hornpipe
8. Flop-Eared Mule
9. Leather Britches
10. Old Joe Clark
11. Over the Waterfall
12. Sailor's Hornpipe
13. Sally Goodin
14. Temperance Reel
15. Turkey in the Straw

SECTION THREE: ODDBALL ECCENTRIC WEIRDO TUNES THAT HELP DEFINE OUR ODDBALL ECCENTRIC WEIRDO GROUP

1. Dixie Hoedown
2. Flowers of Edinborough
3. Foggy Mountain Special
4. The Girl I Left behind Me
5. Kitchen Girl
6. President Garfield's Hnpe
7. President Grant's Hnpe
8. Red Wing
9. Uncle Joe
10. Wildwood Flower

It is this third group of "non-obvious" tunes which reveals our group's personality. Sometimes, selections in such a group are geographically influenced (*e.g.*, a Canadian tune or two snuck over the border and onto the list). Sometimes, selections are personal favorites of the lists' creators. Sometimes, a picker happens on to a tune which, because it's such a great tune (or because the picker is particularly tenacious), takes off and gains acceptance. Our group contains all of the above.

FUN WITH STATISTICS!

•A whopping 15 percent of these tunes start with the letter B

•20 percent begin with the letters R or S

•All but three of the tunes are square, *i.e.*, 32-bar: *Cherokee Shuffle* has four extra bars, *Sally Goodin* is a 16-bar tune and *Foggy Mountain Special* is a 12-bar blues (and originally a banjo tune to boot)

•Two of our tunes—*Wildwood Flower* and *Redwing*—are actually better known as songs. While including songs on a tune list may seem like an impeachable offense, the truth is it doesn't even rise to the level of petty misdemeanor: lots of the tunes on our list—and on any others' lists as well, no doubt—were originally, or are sometimes, or have become songs (*Arkansas Traveler*, *Soldier's Joy*, *Whiskey before Breakfast*, *Sally Goodin* and *Uncle Joe* spring readily to mind).

•12 of the tunes are in A, 11 are in G, 11 are in D, 2 are in Bb, 1 is in C, 2 are played in either G or A and one modulates from G to D. Let's think of the almost-evenly-divided A, G and D tunes as red, blue and green tunes. The red A tunes—a slight majority—are the slap-it-on, smoke-'em-out, we-don't-do-quagmire, mission-accomplished capoed tunes. The blue G tunes are the old-hippy, capos-are-sending-us-to-hell-in-a-handbasket, save-the-earth-don't-mine-metals-for-capos crowd. The green D tunes are the we-can-see-both-sides-of-the-argument-and-we-just-can't-decide-whether-to-capo-or-not bunch. The Bb tunes are sort of burnt umber; they're the fringe group you don't know much about, but who make you a tad nervous. You're glad there aren't more of them. And then, there's the lone C tune. *Billy* is a bearded old coot living in a shack in the woods. Give him any color you want; he don't care. He's harmless, as long as you keep your danged high-falutin' big city capos off'n his property, dang it.

This list, at the ripe old age of five years, is overdue for revision. It was compiled by two guys just getting into flatpicking. They both indicate that an edited list would look significantly different, especially in terms of content and prioritization. Let's remember that these lists should be breathing, living organisms. Do not be afraid to prune your list, to let it evolve, to weed it, to let it grow. If it is stifled, it will eventually eat everyone and everything in the room, finally turning on itself in a gruesome display of gluttony and self-consumption. I don't know about you, but I certainly don't want that kind of crud going on in *my* house.

All right, friends, that's it for this time. If your area doesn't have a list, start one. If it does, start another one, or, if it hasn't been revised in a while, revise it. Oh, and hey, replace your water filter and check your smoke alarm battery. Until next time, I remain your humble and obedient servant. . .

In 1970, Adam was a paid test subject for the Federal Aviation Administration in Oklahoma City. He had to do a series of tests. He was then hooked up to electrodes and told he was to do the same tests again, and that he would be receive shocks if he didn't do better on the second wave of tests than on the first. Not wanting this, he did better on all of the tests, and never was shocked. Now, thirty-five years later, Adam wonders if they really intended to shock him, or if that was just a subterfuge to see how well he worked under stress. He'll probably never know.

John McGann's Eclectic Acoustic

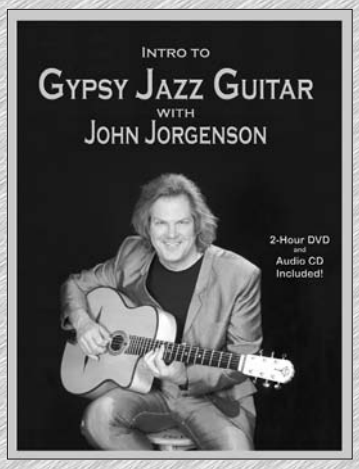
Andrea's Waltz

This beautiful tune is from the new release *Fiddledance* from Frank Ferrel and Friends (Great Meadow Music) which features Frank on fiddle and concertina; Joe Derrane on accordion; Peter Barnes on keyboards, flute and whistle; and myself on guitar, mando, octave mando and lap steel. This is a collection of New England Contra music, played in our own style."Andrea's Waltz," written by Bob Pasquarello, is a popular tune at dances. The waltz is a welcome refresher from the usual contra jigs and reels. I played the intro as a guitar improvisation. Peter and I worked out a few extra chords to enhance the progression. I've written out some of the voicings used, which you might find interesting as a break from the more commonly used chords. The third time through we change to a tango feel, to break up the mood. The fourth time you'll hear the guitar drop out, which changes the texture. The guitar reappears in the B section. This is an arranging trick that works great for those long dances where a set can last 20 to 30 minutes!

John McGann (www.johnmcgann.com) is now an Associate Professor at Berklee College of Music, and among other duties, will be leading a Bluegrass Guitar Lab and Celtic Music Ensemble. He is actively touring and recording in and around Boston with The Wayfaring Strangers (who will be appearing with the Boston Pops at Symphony Hall June 8-10), Rust Farm, The Boston Edge, and others. You can check out his custom transcription service, in which you can have any music of your choice notated, at the above web address. The web site also offers lots of great tips for flatpickers.

New from *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine!*

Intro to Gypsy Jazz Guitar with John Jorgenson



In this first of three volumes of *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's* new Gypsy Jazz Guitar instructional series John Jorgenson has designed and presented one of the most complete acoustic guitar instructional methods available on the market today. Each volume of this three-part series includes a 2-hour instructional DVD, an audio CD with practice audio tracks, and a full format book which presents all of the theoretical information, chord charts, fret board diagrams, music notation, and tablature for the material presented on the DVD.

In this first volume ***Intro to Gypsy Jazz Guitar***, Jorgenson provides the foundational information and practice material necessary for you to gain an understanding of the Gypsy jazz guitar style. The first half of this volume addresses the important element of Gypsy jazz rhythm. After discussing correct right hand rhythm technique, Jorgenson teaches the closed chord forms of a basic blues progression and then systematically introduces new chords into that progression to add "color" and "spice" while also introducing you to the characteristic "moving chord" style of Gypsy rhythm. After addressing the basic blues progression, Jorgenson then transitions into the more Gypsy sounding minor blues progression and introduces the "three-note" chords which are prominent in Gypsy style rhythm guitar.

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Andrea's Waltz

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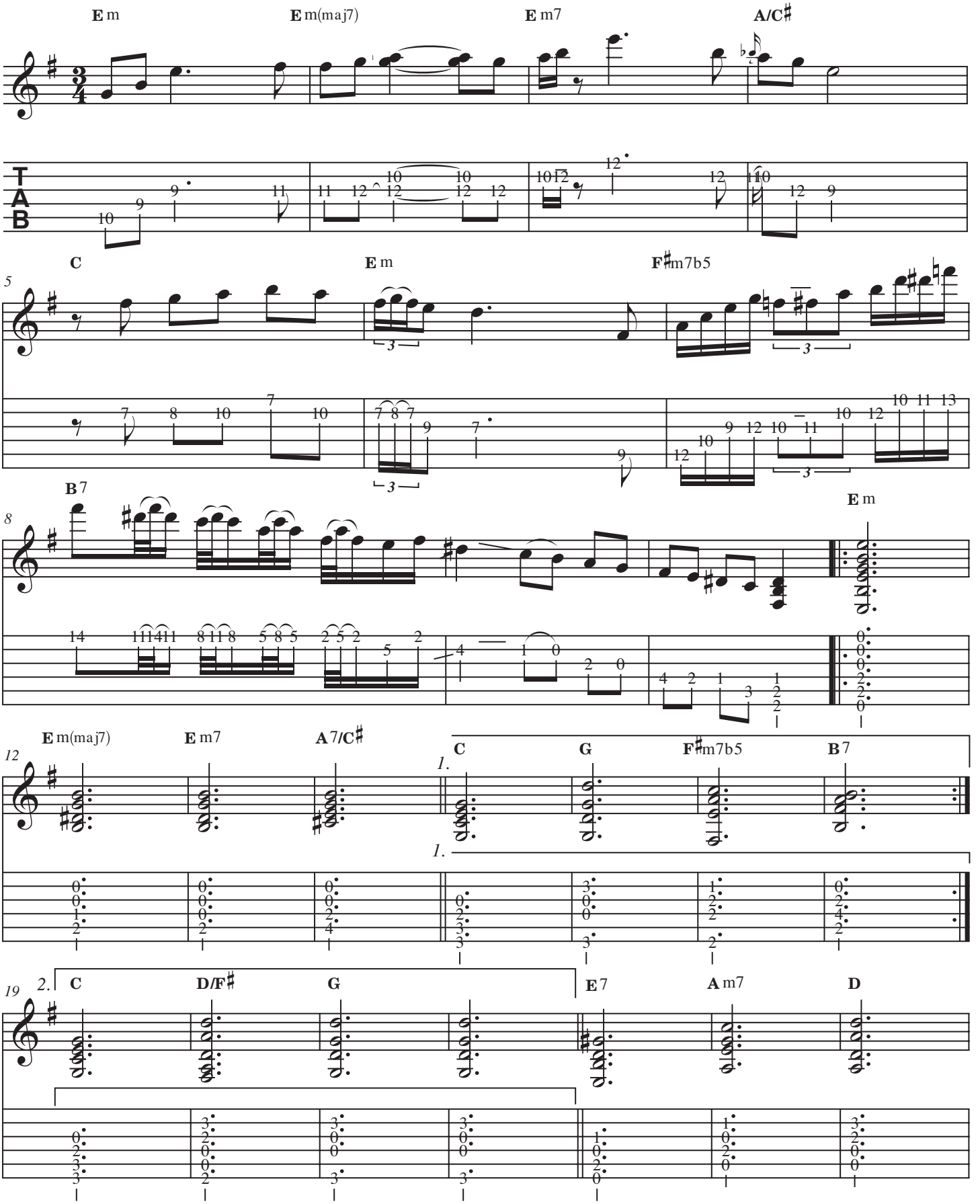
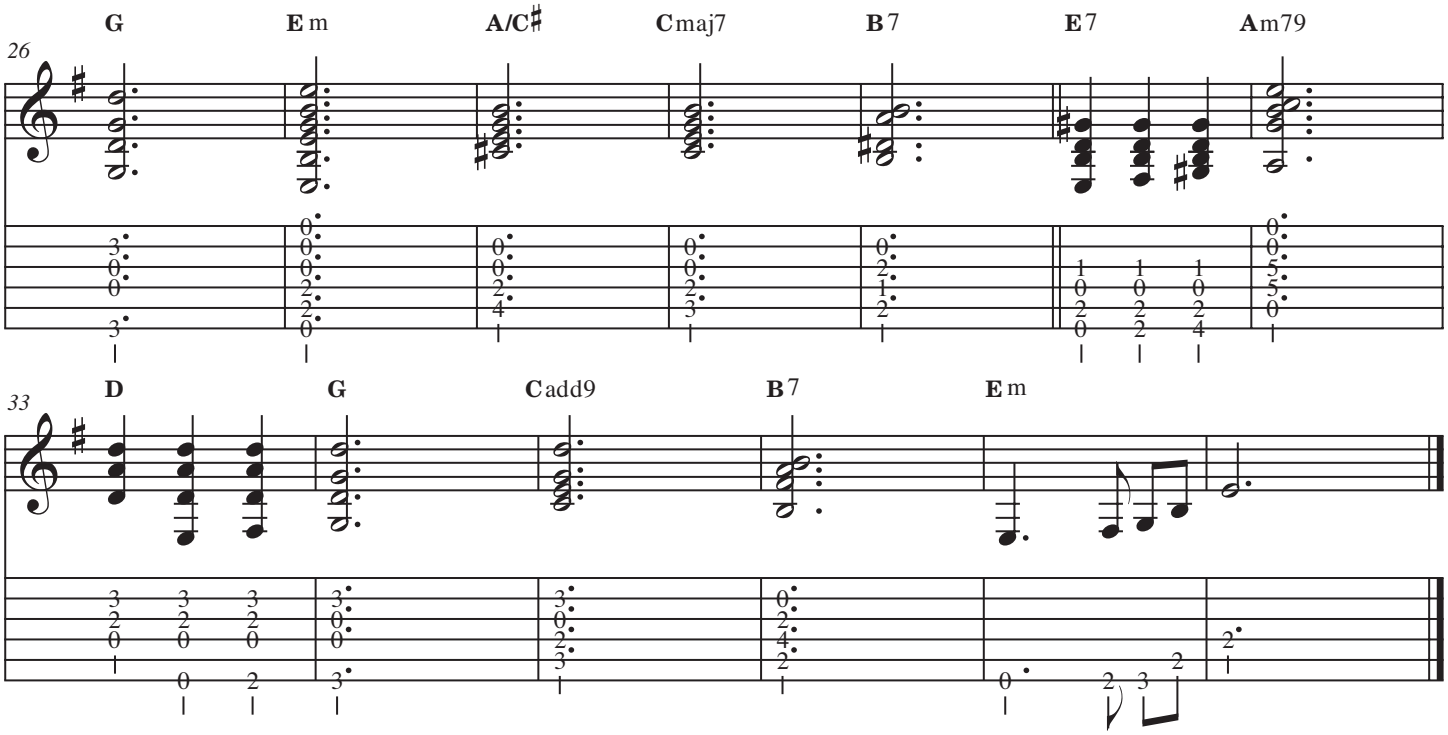
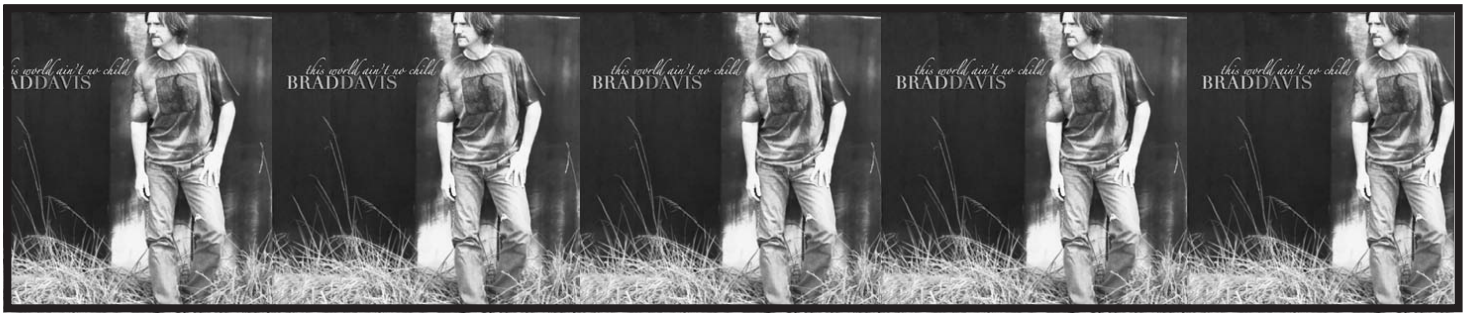

Andrea's Waltz (con't)





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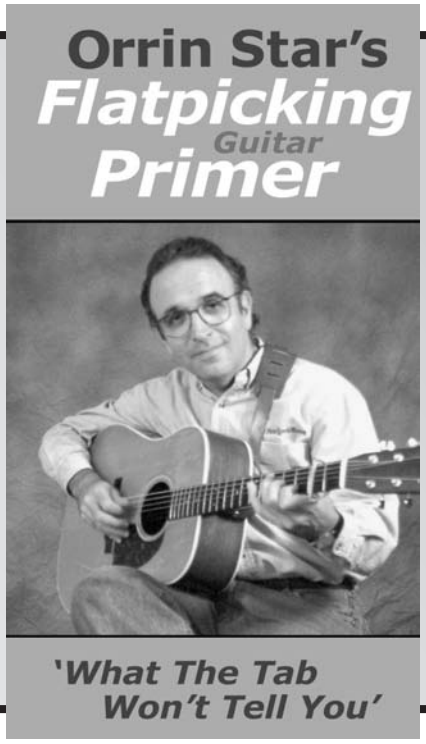

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by Dan Crary

"Polish It, Make It Shine"

It's cold outside today. The ocean is restless and the electric heat in my office is trying vainly to keep the chill off, but the little red dog (curled up under a blanket on my big old chair) and I are as cozy as can be. The Pacific storm blowing in is going to dump rain and cold and wind on us for a few days, but we don't care, because we love it out here on the Oregon coast. In this particular spot—just a few miles down US 101 from Cape Foulweather—a little rough weather is all part of the aesthetic of winter and the joy of that lonesomest of feelings, sitting on the edge of the earth watching the waves break on cold rocks just like they've done here for longer than there were humans around to watch it.

It's the 6th of January, and like any New Year's season, one meditates on what would be good to accomplish in the coming year. As it relates to guitar workshops, I know exactly what I want to accomplish: I want to get us unstuck, unencumbered by all that weird psychology, low self-esteem, assumptions about what it takes to learn music, and generally all the stuff that prevents or slows down the ability of the force to move through our guitar playing. And there are several strategies for this already underway: first, you may have noticed a new Crary guitar lesson series available in the Flatpicking store. I won't do a whole commercial on them, but they do take an approach that is new for me, and that is designed to get us to become players, participants in music, rather than just strugglers. But there's more: In June I intend to advance this cause in my sessions at Steve Kaufmann's Kamp; watch out for me there. I'm there to change the game, my friends. If I do my job, your playing will never be the same! (I know some folks don't want to change, but I'm assuming that if you go to the trouble to get to M'rv'l Tennessee, you didn't do it in order for nothing to happen to your playing!)

This slight shift in my approach involves a different way to learn repertoire, a more "entrepreneurial" and independent approach to creating arrangements, and a more determined way to become proficient at actually playing the material you learn. And just to give you a whiff of this approach, I want to cover one aspect of it today.

I have to thank all of you who have worked with me in workshops in the last few years. Believe me, the learning I did was at least as illuminating as yours was. And one of the things I've learned from many of you is that you're frustrated with how damned hard it all seems. Man-o-man, we struggle, we memorize those tabbed arrangements, we attend those workshops, and we practice (sometimes), and yet it's still elusive. Well, it doesn't have to be that hard, and here's one (only one, but significant) thing we can start doing right now to get the forward motion going again. This is especially for you players who know a few tunes, but it's still a struggle to get them up-to-speed and also clean. If you don't know any tunes at all, you can still do what I'm going to recommend, and it will help you when you do get around to learning some.

The thing I want us to pay attention to today is polish. Polish. Not the sausage, but instead the thing that shines. The refined version. The I've-got-this-thing-perfected-to-where-I-can-nail-it-every-time. In recent years I've seen whole trainloads of guitar players in "advanced" classes where folks believe they'll get the good information, but what "advanced" means is that they know 30-40 tunes, lots of licks and runs, their briefcases bulge with materials, and yet they can't play what they "know" the way they want to be able to.

So today, we polish up a single phrase. That's right: I want you to get inside one tune in your repertoire that you play the best and pick one phrase to work on. It should be from 2-4 measures, and it should be fairly familiar. In case you don't have one of these, I've played a phrase from "Sally Good'n" on the CD, and I've specifically not tabbed it out for you. If you need to learn my phrase, learn it by listening to it, memorizing it, and then find it on the guitar. Just this phrase, not more... today we're not "learning" yet another tune we're unable to play; today we're learning how to play.

Here's the assignment: get this phrase first in your head and then on the guitar. Get it memorized (you have to develop technique on memorized material: you can't be reading a score and developing great chops). Then what I want you to do is to work on this phrase all month long. I want you to absolutely wear it out. And here are several things to do with it. First, find a moderate tempo, a speed where it sounds like music, but it's not particularly fast. Then I want you to:

1. Play the phrase as hard and loud as you can. But don't lose the tempo: get it to where you can play a steady tempo, but play it loud as hell. If you break a string or two, it'll be worth it. You'll have to hold your pick a little tighter. Then when you've got it loud and steady-tempo, then work on doing this smoothly. The intermediate goal is loud, then add steady, then add smooth. Oh yes, and get it so you don't look at the fingerboard: tilt the guitar slightly so as you look at your left hand you do not see the fingerboard. The fingerboard should be a mental picture, not a visual one. And of course, don't watch you right hand.

2. Next, I want you to do the same thing, but this time as softly as possible. Keep the tempo steady, and play it as consistently light as you can. The intermediate goal is soft, then add steady, and finally add smooth.

3. The next move is to do 1 & 2 above at a slightly escalated tempo (a metronome is good for this: advance it one click and repeat 1 & 2 above). Do this gradually, so that you don't speed up so much that you lose what

progress you made doing 1 & 2.

4. Next, I want you to play this phrase at a fairly challenging tempo (but perfect, just like you did in 1 & 2), and add in that you play it once loud, once soft. Go back and forth playing this phrase perfectly alternating between loud and soft, but retaining the perfection you got in 1 & 2.

5. Last of all, I want you to get this repetitious perfection going, and simultaneously get your body relaxed. Try sitting in a straight chair, sit up straight but not tense. Of course there's always some effort and physical discipline in playing an instrument, but use this exercise to become aware of the unnecessary places your body tenses up, and make your self un-tense them. Or if you perform standing up, add the discipline of doing all the above standing, so the polish will apply to the performance.

6. In other words, my friends, I want you to get one phrase, a couple of measures to be absolutely perfect, just the way you want to be able to play. Forget about those many tunes and all that wouldn't-it-be-nice-if-I-just-woke-up-this-morning-and-could-play-like-Doc. If all you have to do is polish up one phrase, you can get pretty close to the Doc standard on that one phrase, but it's going to take you a while.

7. The reason it will take a while is that we haven't been in the habit of requiring perfection of ourselves. Look at all the elements: the phrase is memorized. We can play it loud. We can play it soft. It's smooth. It can go back and forth between loud and soft. We can get it speeded up a little more than we're used to. And we can do it relaxed, not tense, because for this short, precious two little measures, we finally got all the elements together.Here's a tip for making this work: think about the pro players you've seen, and imitate them. Imitate the way they act when there's a guitar in their hands. Hold the guitar they way they do. Pretend to be Brad or Norman or whoever... act like they do while you work up 1-5 above.

8. Will this be tedious? Arguably. Will it be repetitious? Absolutely. Do you have time in your life to spend a month practicing every single phrase that looms ahead of you in your life with the guitar? No way, of course. But doing this a few times with different phrases will accomplish something many of us have never experienced: polish. It's something that cuts through all the bad stuff we tell ourselves about why we're not getting ahead (you know, no talent, maybe I'm stupid or bad, no time to practice, don't have the tab in front of me, and all that blah-blah). No, my friends, if you can play at all, every one of you can do this, and it cuts through all the excuses.

9. And I believe that once you've experienced the perfection of at least one phrase, nothing will ever be the same. Do this to one phrase and you'll know what to do on longer and longer chunks of music. And not just "know"; it'll be more like "desire." It will be like blood on the trail to a hungry critter: experience the feeling of even just a short phrase absolutely right and in hand, and you'll go for that same feeling in everything you do. The difference between your execution and that of a pro is not several hundred more tunes. The difference is polish, the ability to really rip out a perfect phrase. Then of course, it's another phrase, and then another and....well, and then you die. But at least once, one time before you die, give yourself the experience of a polished phrase, and see if it doesn't make everything different.

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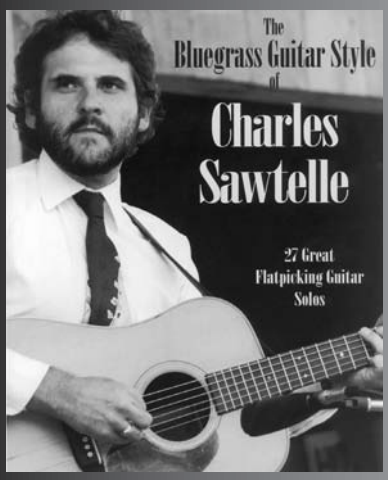

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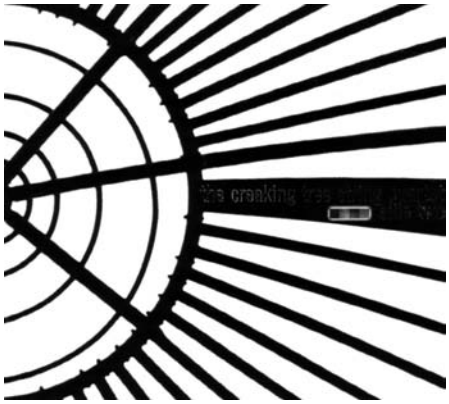
New Release Highlight
Brad Keller and The Creaking Tree String Quartet

by Dan Miller

The sound of an acoustic steel-stringed guitar played in the flatpick style has the power to change lives. This sound has an amazing force, especially when delivered by masters of the craft. For Brad Keller this sound was powerful enough to catch his ear even though he was immersed in the soulful tones of great electric and blues masters like Stevie Ray Vaughn, Jimi Hendrix, Duane Allman, Robert Johnson, and Muddy Waters. After he had been listening to and studying these giants of guitar music for over three years, the sounds of Tony Rice and Norman Blake flatpicking on the Blake & Rice album "opened his eyes" to bluegrass. Shortly after this first flatpick-listening experience turned his head Brad had the opportunity to see Tony Rice play at Merlefest with an all-star band, which included Sam Bush, Bela Fleck, Mark O'Connor, Mark Schatz, and Jerry Douglas. "It was astonishing to see," Brad said. "It blew my mind!"

Brad was nineteen the first year he went to Merlefest and although he continued to play in rock and blues bands, he also began to dig into the flatpicking and bluegrass repertoire. He explained, "It is a difficult style. You can't get it overnight. I started to familiarize myself with acoustic music and jamming. I wanted to just have fun with it. I had a blast sitting around and jamming." Once flatpicking got in his blood, it stuck. Even though he played in electric bands and loved the guitar styles of jazz players like Lenny Breau, Wes Montgomery, and Bill Frisell, and even though he went to college to study jazz guitar, Brad kept flatpicking. "I played electric at school and acoustic at home," he recalled. And flatpicking did, in fact, change his life because something that he did "for fun" eventually turned into a livelihood. Ain't life grand when that works out!

After graduating from high school, Brad knew that he wanted to play guitar and be involved with music. For a few years he played the electric guitar in bands and focused on learning to become a better guitar player. At 23 he decided that his pursuits would be more focused (and eventually more lucrative in the realm of teaching) if he went to college to study music. A Toronto, Ontario, native Brad enrolled



in Capilano College in Vancouver, B.C. While there he studied jazz guitar, music theory, and "advanced improvisation and composing." He also took private lessons with the guitar instructors at the college. He said, "I thought that college and private lessons could advance my playing. I had always kept plugging away at it on my own and I was learning and evolving as a musician, but I felt like going to college would take it to the next level. I also felt that with a higher education I would have a better chance of teaching. I was also interested in the 'science' of music."

After spending two years studying music in college, Brad decided to move back to Toronto. "I learned a lot in the two years," Brad explained. "I was at school and I wanted to get out and apply it. I moved back to Toronto because there are a lot of like-minded musicians there in the acoustic music scene. When I first moved back I just kept working to digest it all. It was a lot of work. I was sitting in with a couple of bands, but I was also working on funding for a project of my own."

In order to pursue his goals as a musician, Brad decided to submit a grant proposal to the Canada Council for the Arts in order to help fund the production of a recording project for a jazz trio that he had assembled. The trio consisted of electric guitar, bass, and drums. During the time that he was working on some demo tracks to submit with his grant proposal, Brad invited a few friends to his house for a jam session. It was the first time the friends had played together as a quartet. Brad said, "I had originally met Andrew Collins (mandolin) at a John Reischman show in Vancouver, while I was out there attending school. We both moved back to Toronto eventually, and played together frequently there. Brian (bass) was in my jazz trio. John (fiddle) was the last piece of the puzzle. That first jam session took place on the second day he lived in Toronto, and it was the first time we had played together as a quartet. John had moved from Montreal, and hadn't even unpacked yet. We all got together and started showing each other various tunes that we had each written. It was the first time we had ever played together, but I had recording gear in the basement and decided to record the jam."

Evidentially Brad had a good feeling about the recorded jam session because he sent it in along with the grant proposal he submitted for the jazz trio. His "fun hobby" turned into a "fun job" in January 2001 when Brad found out that while his grant proposal for the jazz trio was unsuccessful, the Council offered him $10,000 to fund a recording project with the other "unit." This unit quickly became The Creaking Tree String Quartet.

Brad said, "It was a great combination. We were all like-minded acoustic musicians who were interested in various genres of music. We were all about the same age and we were all composers." The self-titled project *Creaking Tree String Quartet* was released in March of 2003 and is a wonderful mix of acoustic instrumentals produced by the band and mastered by Jim Nunally.

Recalling his work on this project, Jim Nunally said, "Brad is a wonderful player. I first heard him while mixing *Creaking Tree String Quartet* CD. All of the players in that

group are stellar. In my mind what helps the band stand out is the support Brad gives, not just in his exceptional lead playing but his solid rhythm playing. On the current CD, *Side Two*, he shows the a depth of playing that goes beyond his years for maturity, I dig that. It seems he has done a lot of listening. I hear sounds in his style that remind me of Mark O'Conner, Alison Brown, Scott Nygaard, and David Grier. Brad is a really good player, I enjoy his musicianship and music."

With the exception of Edgar Meyer's "Sliding Down," all of the tunes on their first CD are composed by members of the band. They recorded three tunes written by Brian Kobayakawa (bass), three by John Showman (violin), three by Andrew Collins (mandolin), and three by Brad Keller (guitar). The music is a great eclectic mix of acoustic instrumentals: think David Grisman/Mike Marshall/Edger Meyer and you'll have some an idea about what you can expect on this CD. However, I would not classify this band as a "clone" band of any of the aforementioned artists, nor would I classify any individual instrumentalist as a copycat or clone. They each have their own ideas and expression, and the band has unique sound, groove, and feel. This CD received a Juno nomination (Canada's equivalent to the GRAMMYs).

Creaking Tree's second recording *Side Two* was released in October of 2004. It was funded by the Ontario Arts Council, produced by the band, and mixed and mastered by Todd Phillips. Again, each member of the band contributed three original tunes to the project, and once again there is an eclectic mix of acoustic instrumentals executed by an innovative, well-rehearsed, and tight unit. One of the most challenging aspects of performing in a band such as Creaking Tree is the versatility the musicians must possess in order to contribute to tunes which range from fast and furious breakdowns to slow, soulful ballads. These musicians not only each exhibit the talent for writing and arranging within this wide musical spectrum, they also each contribute solo and accompaniment parts that demonstrate their abilities to expertly perform them.

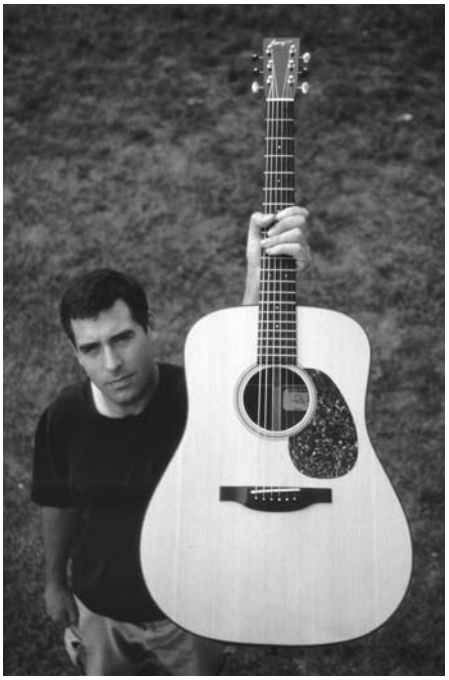
Creaking Tree's eclectic blend of acoustic instrumental music has served them well. Because they have not been "pigeon-holed" as a bluegrass band or an acoustic jazz band or a folk band, they have been invited to play at a great variety of music festivals and events. For instance, this past summer they played at the Montreal Jazz Festival, the Atlantic Jazz Festival, the Vancouver Folk Festival, a classical music festival, and several bluegrass festivals (including IBMA). Brad says, "The cross-over keeps us busy." When they are not on stage, the band is busy rehearsing. "During the summer we rehearse everyday and perform about every other night. During the off season we rehearse two times per week and play one regular gig a week."

While his band has been incredibly successful, Brad hasn't let the success go to his head. He still avidly practices and studies in an effort to continually improve his playing. Recently, in November of 2004, Brad received a "professional development grant" to further his music study. He said, "I hadn't taken lessons since I left school and I wanted to study more." He used the money to travel to the United States and study with bluegrass mandolin and guitar great John Moore. "John had a reputation of being a really good teacher. He has taught a lot of lessons to many great players. I went and studied with him for four to five hours a day for five days. I wanted to study bluegrass guitar and receive traditional insight from someone who had grown up around it. I wanted to know how he approached tunes, how he defined 'drive,' how he warmed up for shows, how he got good tone—things like that. I found him to be really knowledgeable and very informative. It was fascinating. I recorded all the lessons on minidisk. He gave me enough to work on for months."

When asked about Brad, John Moore had this to say, "Brad Keller is a very talented and driven musician. He has a powerful work ethic, complimented by his ability to learn new information, develop it, blend it with his own style and perform it right back to you. I think he's definitely someone to keep an eye on and enjoy as he moves to the fore front of flatpicking."

In addition to being a student, Brad has also taught guitar lessons since leaving college. He says, "I teach everything from Metallica to Pike Country Breakdown!" When asked what advice he gives his students, he quickly responded "Use a metronome religiously!" He recalls, "Years ago I thought that I had good time until I forced myself to practice with a metronome. A huge part of bluegrass is getting the drive and playing with other people. When you accompany someone else, they will be a lot happier playing with you if you have good time. Our band always practices with a metronome. It helps smooth things out if we start to rush or drag."

Brad also recommends that students learn to play tunes in different keys. He says, "When you change keys and positions



Brad and his Bourgeois

it helps open up new parts of the fretboard." He also encourages students to work to get tunes correct at a slow tempo before they try to play anything fast. "If you can't play it slow, you can't play it fast. You need to work to play the correct notes, the correct phrasing, and the correct time slow before you speed it up with the metronome."

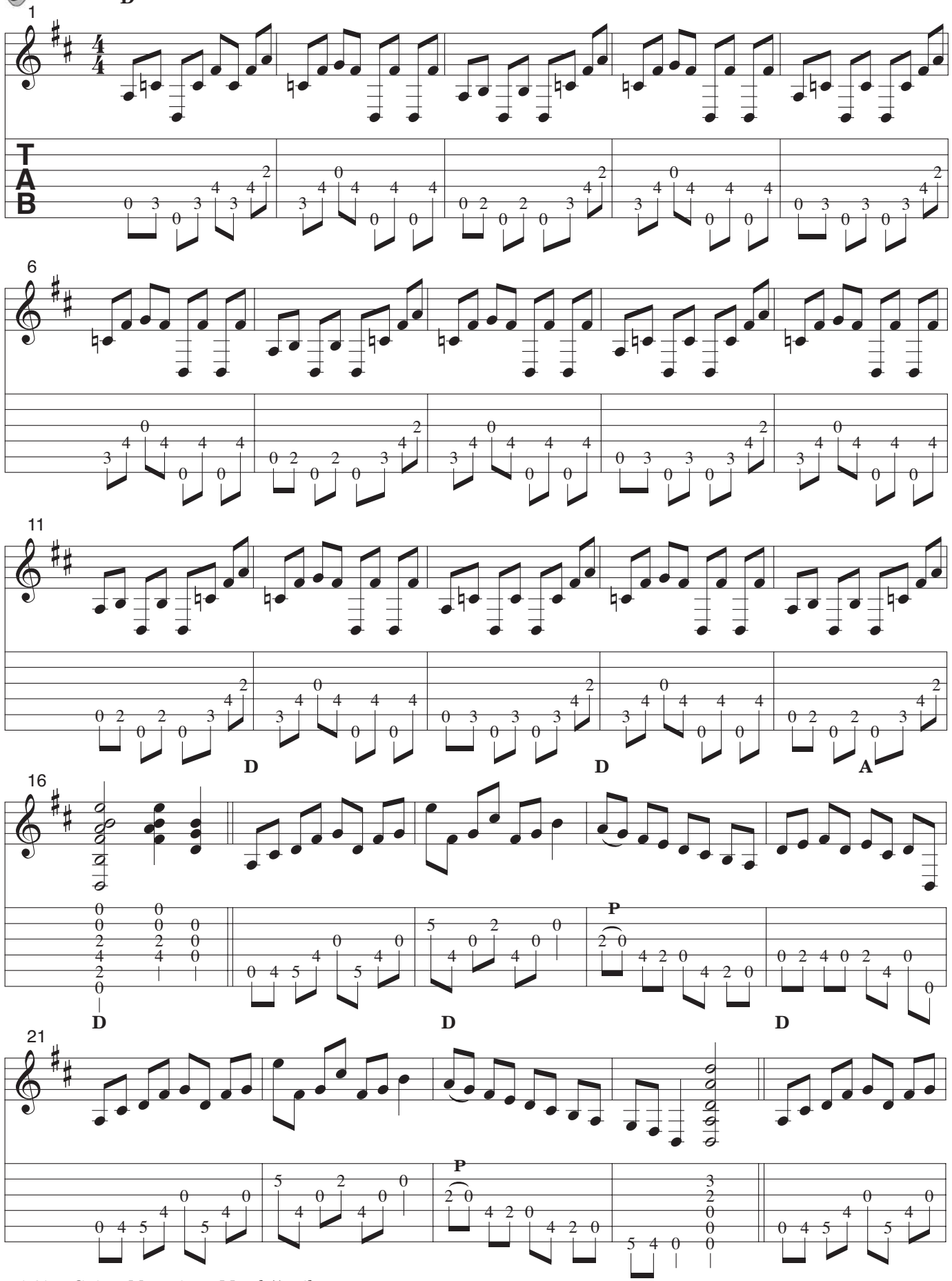
Regarding his guitar of choice, Brad is a dyed-in-the-wool Bourgeois fan. He has owned and played a Country Boy model with mahogany back and sides and Sitka spruce top since 1998. In 2004 he bought a Bourgeois OM with Indian rosewood back and sides and an Adirondack spruce top. He says that he now goes on stage with both guitars.

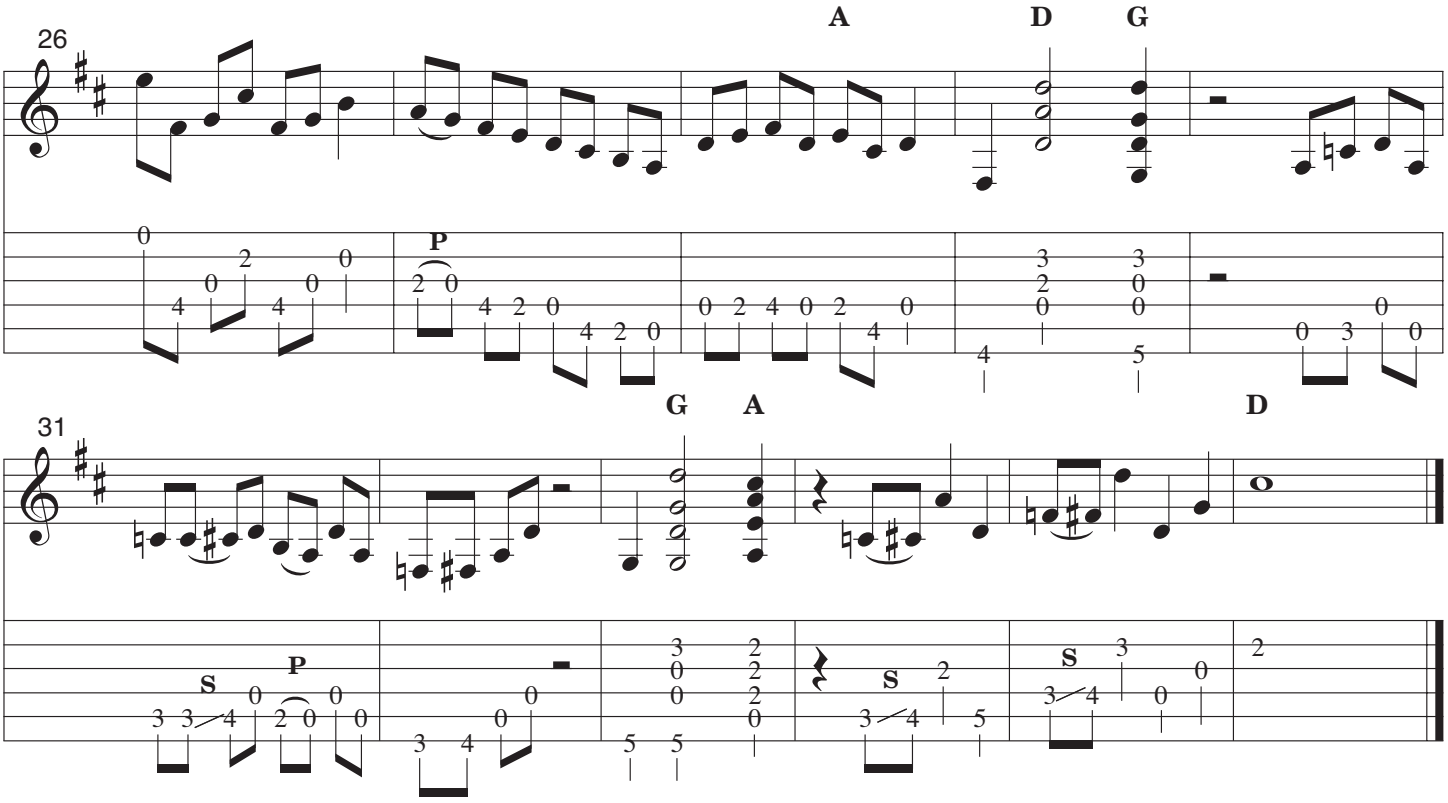
Brad was recently given a grant by the Toronto Arts Council to produce a solo recording of his original tunes. We can look forward to that coming out in the near future, but until then, pick up a copy of either or both of the Creaking Tree String Quartet's recordings. It is great music!

On the audio companion that accompanies this issue we have included a cut from Creaking Tree's second CD. Brad wrote the tune "Ghetto Rag," which is transcribed on the following pages. Brad said, "The guitar solo-section is based on the Lydian mode, and the guitar "Intro" is roughly based on the cross-picking pattern from the "B" section of Beaumont Rag.' "

Audio CD
Track 49

Ghetto Rag

Arranged by Dan Bletz
Transcribed by Brad Davis

Ghetto Rag (con't)



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Brad Davis:

I'm Not Gonna Let My Blues Bring Me Down

Brad Davis brings his acoustic guitar and songwriting talent to the forefront with the release of his new solo recording *I'm Not Gonna Let My Blues Bring Me Down*. Speical guests include: **Earl Scruggs, Billy Bob Thornton, Sam Bush, David Grier, Rob Ickes, Greg Davis, Tommy Shaw, John Jorgenson, Jon Randall, Glen Duncan, and Kelly Nolf**

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Reviews

The Kentucky Colonels *Appalachian Swing!* re-mastered

WORLD-PACIFIC stereo
APPALACHIAN SWING!
THE KENTUCKY COLONELS
(with Roland and Clarence White)
12 GREAT INSTRUMENTALS
NINE POUND HAMMER ▫ PRISONER'S SONG ▫ FADED LOVE
JOHN HENRY ▫ FLAT FORK ▫ LISTEN TO THE MOCKINGBIRD
I AM A PILGRIM ▫ BILLY IN THE LOW GROUND ▫ LEE HIGHWAY
CLINCH MOUNTAIN BACK-STEP ▫ WILD BILL JONES ▫ SALLY GOODIN

Reviewed by David Dugas

When I first learned that Sierra Records was working on a re-mastered version of the classic Kentucky Colonels recording, *Appalachian Swing!* I was not only excited at the prospect of finally hearing a high quality, re-mastered release of this long out-of-print, historically important recording. I was also very relieved that I would no longer have to scour the virtual aisles of eBay for copies of this recording. Imagine being able to buy a new retail copy of this long out-of-print recording? Let the good times roll!

For those of you new to the Kentucky Colonels and specifically to Clarence White, *Appalachian Swing!* is one of the most influential instrumental albums in the history of bluegrass music. Clarence White's guitar playing forced the bluegrass world to sit up and take notice. Clarence was one of several players who proved that the guitar (still an upstart bluegrass lead instrument back in 1964) could function as lead instrument on the same level as the mandolin, banjo, and fiddle. Clarence's guitar playing inspired a legion of loyal followers including Jerry Garcia, David Grisman, David Grier, Steve Pottier, Sandy Rothman, and many others. Please note that Clarence's playing was the subject of a complete *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* issue (volume 2, #5, Jul/Aug '98). Please check out that issue of FGM for details on Clarence.

There are multiple facts of this recording that I find inspiring. First and foremost, the musical content set the standard for bluegrass instrumental recordings when it was originally released in 1964. Clarence White's playing is still the dream of flatpickers world-wide. Second, the correct sound stage (left-right performer orientation) finally conveys what the original recording should have sounded like when it was released on CD. Third, the improved sound quality of the recording allows the instruments to be heard clearly and distinctly from one another. The rhythm guitar sounds like a guitar, not a garbled mess of sound as in previous CD releases. The mandolin is clear and distinct and Roland's breaks and chop can be heard clearly. The bass is clear and distinct. The banjo can be heard clearly when it's playing rhythm accompaniment as well as when it's taking breaks, and it also doesn't dominate the recording as in previous mixes. The Dobro and fiddle are well balanced and can be heard clearly–neither overwhelms the mix. For this flatpicker the most important aspect of this recording is that I can finally hear Clarence's lead breaks and his rhythm accompaniment (chordal and scalar) clearly. Yay!

On "Clinch Mountain Backstep" I was struck at how cleanly and clearly the instruments can be heard from one another. The banjo can be heard very distinctly in the right channel and the mandolin chop in the left. While Roland takes his break in this first tune, you can clearly hear Clarence on his D-28 (now owned by Tony Rice) playing rhythm and answering Roland's mando breaks in a call and answer fashion. Clarence's D-18 clearly rings through on the lead breaks on this tune.

In "Listen to the Mockingbird" Clarence takes the melody and twists it and turns it with syncopation, crosspicking and blues phrasing. On previous releases Clarence's backup playing was nearly inaudible, which is not the case here. We can clearly hear Clarence's syncopated bass runs in his accompaniment.

Clarence's first break in the B-section of "Billy in the Lowground" contains a classic example of his use of syncopation and crosspicking. This break has been documented by several authors, including John Carlini (in *Frets Magazine*) and Russ Barenberg (in his out-of-print book, *Clarence White/Guitar*). It's a great study in syncopation in a bluegrass fiddle tune framework.

My only real complaint about this release is in the audio quality of "I Am a Pilgrim." The tape bleed-through on the left track of the recording is very apparent. This is a minor gripe considering Clarence's breaks and accompaniment on this tune are legendary and can be heard clearly. Clarence's use of syncopation and fiery blues style playing in this tune has inspired many flatpickers worldwide to break out of the standard eight note single line pattern and try their hand at syncopation and moving the melody across the bar line.

In addition to the twelve original re-mastered tunes, Sierra has included three bonus tracks from the Tut Taylor recording *Dobro Country*. According to the liner notes, *Dobro Country* was recorded several months after *Appalachian Swing!* with Roland, Clarence, Billy Ray Latham, and Victor Gaskin.

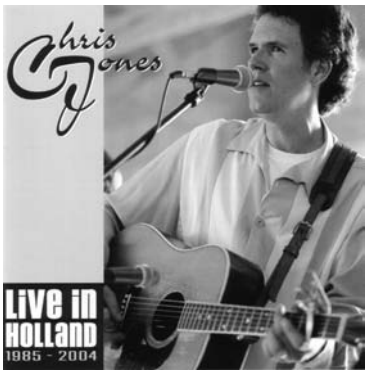
Even before this re-mastered release from Sierra, *Appalachian Swing!* was my most listened-to CD. With the new release it'll stay at the top for a very long time. *Appalachian Swing!* should be required listening and learning for every flatpicking in learning the history of our music. Let's hope this wonderful release doesn't go out of print as previous releases have.

Thank you, John Delgatto of Sierra Records, for re-mastering and releasing this historic recording. Can we hope to see a re-release of *Dobro Country* anytime soon?

Song List: Clinch Mountain Backstep, Nine Pound Hammer, Listen to the Mockingbird, Wild Bill Jones, Billy in the Lowground, Lee Highway Blues, I Am A Pilgrim, Prisoner's Song, Sally Goodin', Faded Love, John Henry, Flat Fork.

Appalachian Swing is now available at www.flatpickingmercantile.com. Visit the website or call 800-413-8296.

Chris Jones
Live in Holland
1985-2004
Strictly Country Records



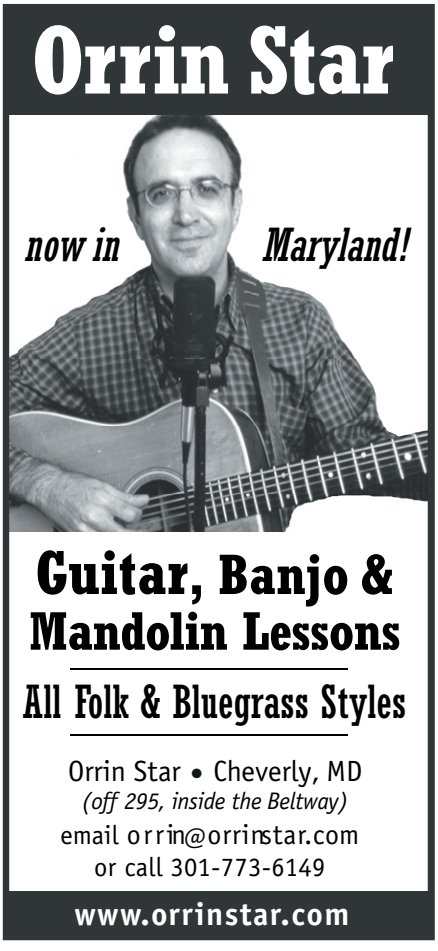
Reviewed by Dan Miller

When I ran into Sally Jones at the IBMA FanFest in October of 2004 and she told me that her husband Chris had just released a new live CD that was a compilation for various shows with a variety of different bands I was very excited. I typically like live performance CDs and Chris Jones is one of my all-time favorite singers and guitar players in bluegrass music. When I left Louisville, Kentucky, that Sunday I had an eight hour drive ahead of me and I could not think of anything I would rather listen to than Chris Jones bluegrass. My enthusiasm, and expectations, were both high. When I hit the road and popped the disc in the CD player I was not disappointed. In fact, it immediately became my favorite Chris Jones CD. I listened to the disc over and over again on that trip and now, three months later, I continue to listen. It is great stuff.

The songs on the CD were recorded during live shows that Chris has performed in Holland with various bands between 1985 and 2004—hence, the name of the CD: *Chris Jones Live in Holland 1985-2004*. The bands represented here include Whetstone Run (with Lynn Morris and Marshall Wilburn), Weary Hearts (with Mike Bubb and Butch Baldassari), several incarnations of Chris Jones and the Night Drivers (one group with Rickie Simpkins on mandolin, another with Ron Stewart on fiddle), Chris with a Czech back up band, and a bonus track featuring Chris' newest band, the Chris Jones Coalition. In the liner notes Chris said, "compiling songs for this live album felt a little like looking through a photo album spanning a couple of decades." The "snapshots" he has chosen are the best of what has been recorded. It is as if Chris has looked through all of those photo albums and is saying, "Here, take a listen to my best stuff."

Without gushing, I will simply say that I love the song selection, I love the guitar playing, I love the singing, and I love the overall musicianship. If you like Chris Jones' music and/or you like Chris' column in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*, I think you will love this CD too!

Song List: Nashville Blues, The Way I Am, Fork in the Road, This Weary Heart You Stole Away, Drinking From the Fountain, I've Covered My Tracks, I'm Ready If You're Willin', Alone With You, Brand New Pair of Shoes, Cabin On the Hill, Cloudy Days, Whispering Now, Diesel Smoke on Danger Road.

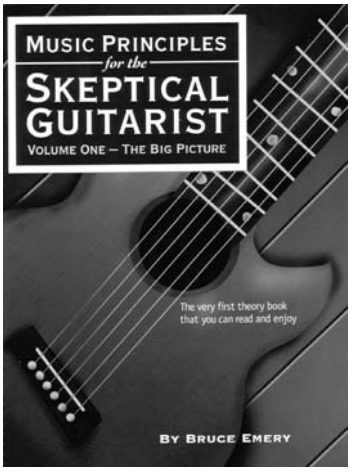


Instructional Material Reviews

Music Theory

In the last issue I began what I said would be a series of reviews on instructional material which focuses on music theory. I began this series with Fred Sokolow's *Fretboard Roadmaps* book/CD set and Rich Severson's *Theory for the Road* CD set. I chose to start with these products because I felt like each of these items would give the student a good start without being too overwhelming. In this issue I want to present two more products that I think fit into this category. They are both very helpful in building a foundation for further study, very practically oriented, and not too overwhelming. The first is Bruce Emery's *Music Principles for the Skeptical Guitarist (Volume One)* and the second is Steve Kaufman's new Homespun DVD *Figuring Out the Fingerboard: A Flatpicker's Guide to Improvising*.

Bruce Emery
Music Principles for the Skeptical Guitarist
Volume One—The Big Picture
Skeptical Guitarist Publications


Music Principles for the Skeptical Guitarist
Volume One — The Big Picture
The very first theory book that you can read and enjoy
By Bruce Emery

Reviewed by Dan Miller

This past summer I was visiting Gryphon Music in Palo Alto, California, waiting for my friends Dix Bruce and Jim Nunally's Martin Guitar clinic to begin and I picked up an interesting looking book called *Music Principles for the Skeptical Guitarist*. The title caught my attention because I feel like bluegrass flatpickers can certainly be a skeptical lot when it comes to studying

music theory. The "I just want to pick" attitude is prevalent. I flipped through the pages of the book and was impressed with the practical presentation and amount of material that was covered. I also noticed that the presentation continued in *Volume Two*, subtitled *The Fretboard*. When I got back home I sent Bruce Emery an email and asked if he would send me the two books to review. He was happy to oblige. My original intention was to review both books at the same time, but as I rolled up my sleeves, got out my guitar, and dove into the first volume I realized that trying to get through the material in both books in one review was going to be too big a task. So in this issue I will just talk about *Volume One—The Big Picture* and save the review of *Volume Two—The Fretboard* until the next issue.

As impressed as I was with Bruce's first volume when I casually flipped through it at the music store, I was twice as impressed when I actually started working with the material. The first volume is divided into two sections. The first section is titled "The First Approach" and the second section is titled "The Second Approach." The first section is high on practical application, covering the "theory" part in very broad strokes, while the second section goes back and presents the theory part in more detail. I like this presentation because going through the first section gives you an experiential and practical basis for the material that is presented in section two.

Bruce's "First Approach" is to introduce you to chords and how they work together. After presenting some basic information about notes and pitches, how the guitar is tuned, and how the notes lay out on the fretboard, he shows you "The Big Fifteen" chords. These are the most prominent 15 chord forms that appear in folk, rock, country, or bluegrass music. He shows you chord diagrams, provides some detail about fingering, and asks that you learn how to play these fifteen chords on your guitar. Once you are armed with this knowledge and experience, you are ready to learn about how these chords work together.

In presenting how the "big fifteen" chords work together Bruce first talks about playing in different keys and then presents the "1-4-5 System" in the keys of G, C, D, A, and E. You are asked to play through this progression in each key thus giving your brain, hands, and ear an experiential understanding of this, the most popular progression in folk, rock, country, and bluegrass music. Bruce then shows you how to substitute the 7th of the 5 chord in the 1-4-5 progression to give the progression an "edgy" feel (for instance, in the key of G you would play a G-C-D7 progression instead of G-C-D).

Next, more information is given regarding the relationship between the 1 and the 5 chord and you are provided with various song examples to practice in the keys of C, A, G, E, and D which utilize only the 1 and 5 chord in each key (actually the 7th of the 5 chord). Working through these simple chord progressions gives you a very good feel for the tonal quality of moving from the 1 to the 5 and then back to the 1.

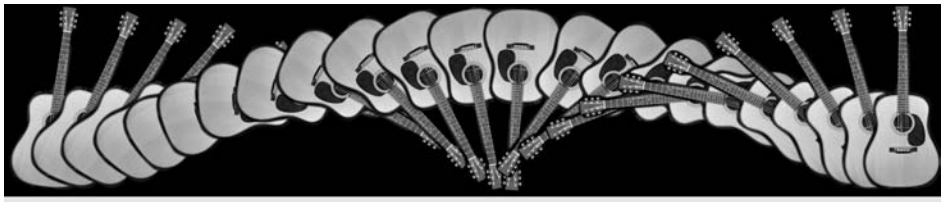
Next Bruce adds the 4 chord into the mix and you are given a variety of 1-4-5 progressions to practice in 5 different keys. Once again, you are building experiential knowledge of the sound quality of this popular progression. The presentation of this material is easy to understand and follow. Chords charts and graphics are used extensively.

After you have gained this practical information about the use of the 1-4-5 progression in 5 different keys, Bruce introduces the minor chords. He discusses which minor chords are used in each of the various keys and how they are best, or most commonly, employed and why. He once again gives you a variety of songs to practice in each key, adding these minor chords, so that you can gain experiential and practical knowledge. He then discusses and demonstrates the use of the secondary dominant chords (the 5 of the 5) and provides you with a few songs to practice so that your ear gets accustomed to the sound of the progression.

In the last part of the first section of the book Bruce provides a "bunch of useful chords." Here you are given various 7th chords, suspended chords, major and minor chords forms in a variety of keys. All-in-all the first section of this book provides you with a very practical knowledge of chord progressions. The biggest advantage gained here is the ability to hear chord changes and understand them so that you can easily jump into a jam session and play along with songs that you may have never heard before because, even though you haven't heard the particular song, you can "hear" the chord progression pattern and understand how the chords will move. This is a very beneficial skill to acquire.

My frustration in writing this review thus far is that I cannot adequately explain to you in a limited amount of space all of the great material that is presented here in support of the general concepts that I have mentioned above. And I know that the frustration will now get worse as I try to describe to you the second section because Bruce has packed so much great material in this section. I can only provide an overview here.

In the section titled "The Second Approach" Bruce gives you the nitty-gritty theoretical details which lay behind the information that was presented in the first section. In this section you will learn about the chromatic scale, you will learn about



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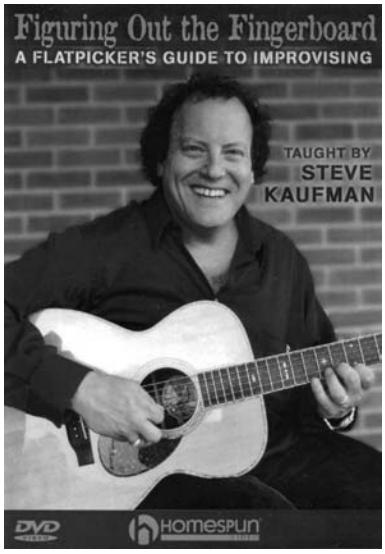
how these notes lay out on the fingerboard, you will learn about the major scale, whole steps and half steps, scale degrees, the major scales in the keys of C, A, G, E, and D, and you will learn a lot about chord families. You will learn about intervals and how major and minor chords are formed based on those intervals. You will know the chord families in the keys of C, A, G, E, and D inside and out by the time you finish this section. You will then learn the details of the 1-4-5 relationship, the dominant 7th chords, the tonic-dominant relationship, overlapping chord families, chord substitutions, and triad spellings. Once you have worked through this information you will have a very good theoretical understanding of the practical knowledge that was gained in the first section.

The final portion of the book's second section deals with the Circle of Fifths. Bruce addresses the Circle of Fifths in 31 pages and it is the best presentation on this important theoretical tool that I have ever seen. The first 99 pages of this book are very good, but I would say that the Circle of Fifths section (from page 100 through page 131) is worth the price of this book alone. I learned more about how to use the Circle of Fifths from this book than I've every learned about it from any other source. What I liked best about this presentation, which applies to the entire book, is that Bruce not only explains the theory, he also gives you a lot of practical and hands-on examples of how the theory is applied and he gives you very easy-to-understand diagrams, charts, and illustrations to help you get your head wrapped around otherwise hard to grasp material.

I thoroughly enjoyed going through this book and I learned a great deal from it. I can't wait to dive into Volume 2. If you are interested in ordering *Music Principles for the Skeptical Guitarist: Volume One—The Big Picture*, visit Bruce Emery's website: www.skepticalguitarist.com

Steve Kaufman
Figuring Out the Fingerboard: A Flatpickers Guide to Improvising
Homespun Tapes



Reviewed by Dan Miller

Everyone who has ever attended a Steve Kaufman workshop (and there have been thousands of you!) will say that Steve is a good teacher who knows how to present well organized material. So it will be no surprise to any of you when I say right off the bat that Steve has done it again! He has presented information which can be hard for many people to learn and done so in a well organized and easy-to-understand manner. However, while many of Steve's instructional books and videos present arrangements for you to sit down and learn note-for-note (where Steve has done all of the headwork for you and you just have to practice the tabs that he has given you), this one is different. While Steve does give you a great method and an easy roadmap to follow, he asks you to do a lot of homework and figure things out yourself here. Which is a good thing! Even with this great method, you are not going to learn the fingerboard or learn how to improvise without doing your homework. The best thing about this DVD, and accompanying booklet, is that Steve gives you a great method and then assigns the right homework. You just have to sit down behind the guitar and do the work. Many times finding the right method is half the battle, so let's look at Steve's method and talk about how it is going to help you.

Steve's approach to learning the fingerboard and then learning how to improvise is presented in four "phases." Phase one, "Learn the Tunes," consists of learning basis arrangements of six standard fiddle tunes. Steve's reason for starting with these tunes is based on the fact that in learning these tunes you are going to learn how scales are used, you are going to learn melody lines and how they work in various keys, and you are going to learn how melody lines intersect from tune to tune. Learning these fiddle tunes will give your mind and hands some good practical knowledge that will be necessary to help understand and practice the theory that is presented later. Steve teaches straight forward arrangements that are primarily based on chord shapes. This knowledge comes in handy later. The tunes that are taught are "Soldier's Joy" in the key of C, "June Apple" in the key of C, "Cripple Creek" in the key of G, "Old Joe Clark" in the key of G, "Cluck Old Hen" in the key of Am, and "Arkansas Traveler" in the key of D.

In phase two, Steve demonstrates moveable chord forms in order to teach the concept of "chord centers." Here you will learn the C-A-G-E-D system of chord forms and shapes and how to move these shapes to all areas of the neck in order to find all of the various chord inversions from the first position moving all the way up the neck. By learning the five chord shapes of the CAGED system and then working

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to move those shapes sequentially up the neck to form various major chords, the neck begins to open itself up to you. Steve recommends that you solidly ingrain this knowledge in your mind and on the guitar neck by playing the rhythm progression to all six of the fiddle tunes that you learned in phase one using the CAGED chord forms. Your homework is to play rhythm to the tune using only the chord forms on the first four frets, then only those forms found between frets 4 to 8, then only those found on frets 8 to 12, thus familiarizing yourself with all of the chord shapes in all areas of the neck.

Phase three is almost entirely a homework phase. Here Steve asks that you learn every tune that you learned in phase one in each of the C-A-G-E-D keys. This homework assignment requires that you only learn them on the first five frets. Steve gives a few examples, but this phase is primarily left to you to work on and figure out. Anyone who has ever tried this exercise knows that it is a wonderful exercise that can really open up the fingerboard for you. Steve gives some great tips on how to find the first note of the song in any particular key and then suggests that once you find that first note, it is only a matter of finding the sequence of notes that follow by humming them and then seeking them out on the fingerboard. While this can be frustrating at times, the knowledge gained is well worth the frustration.

In phase four, Steve has you play all of the six fiddle tunes once again, but this time you learn how to play them out of each of the CAGED chord centers. In other words, you start with the first tune, "Soldier's Joy," in the key of C at the C position at the nut. Then you learn to play it at the A-shape C position, then the G-shape C position, etc. all the way up the neck. Steve demonstrates this for a few of the tunes and provides hints and tips on how to tackle this homework assignment and get through it all.

Gaining a thorough knowledge of the fingerboard and learning how to improvise can be two of the most difficult and frustrating parts of your guitar playing journey. In this 90-minute DVD Steve Kaufman provides you with a clear method that helps systematize the learning process. With Steve's method you will have the tools—from there it is just up to you and your guitar! If you are interested in ordering this DVD, check Steve's website: www.flatpik.com.

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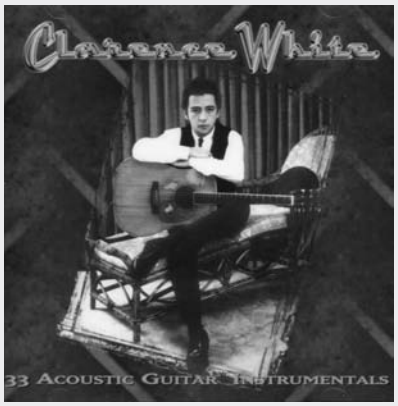

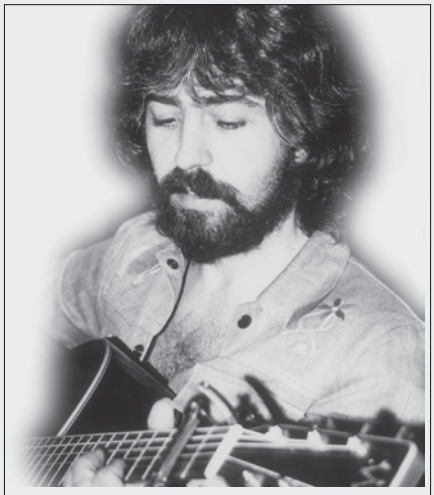

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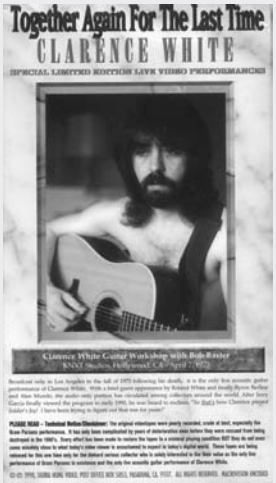

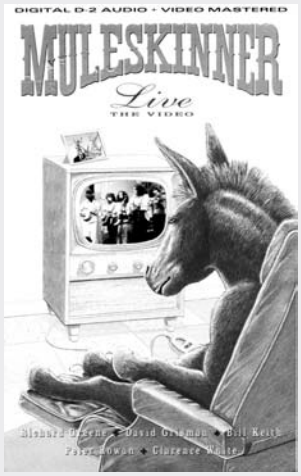

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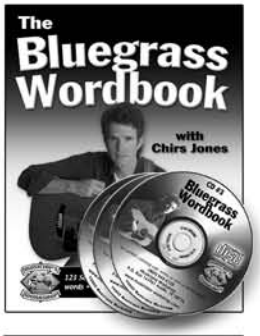

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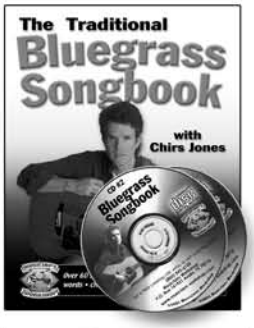

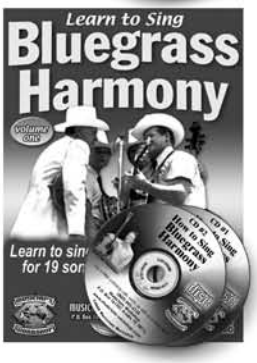

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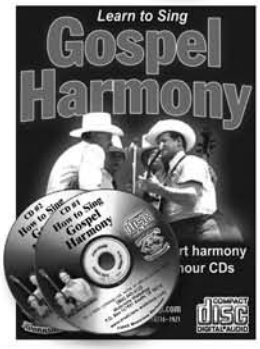

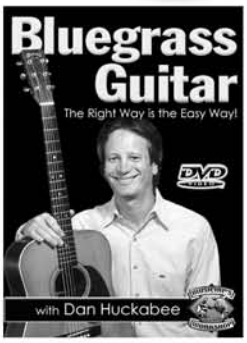

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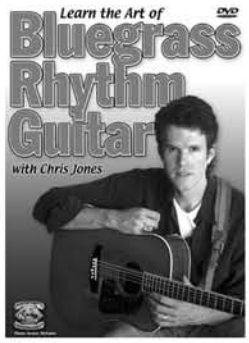

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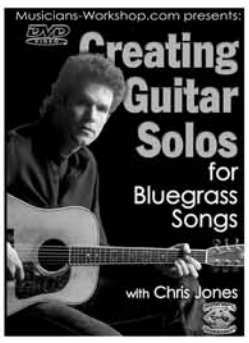

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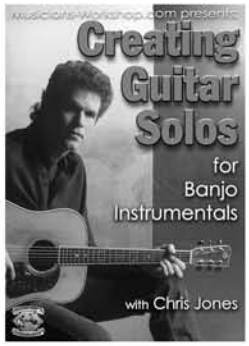

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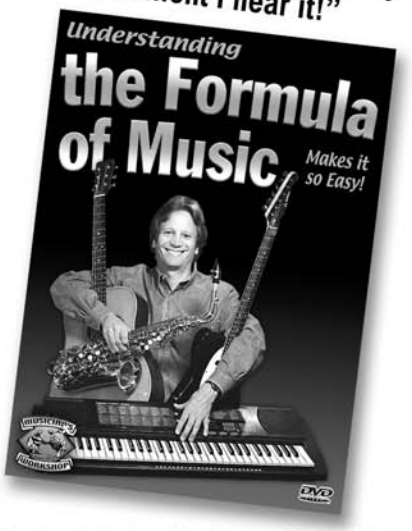

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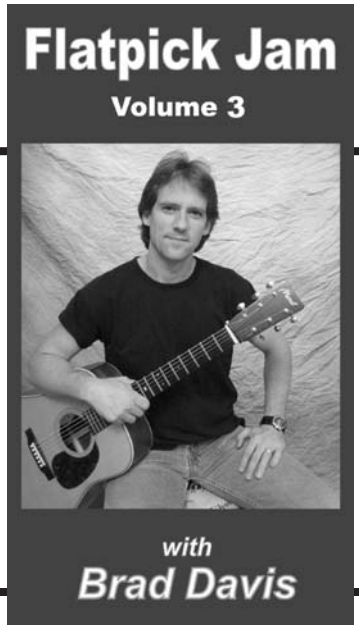

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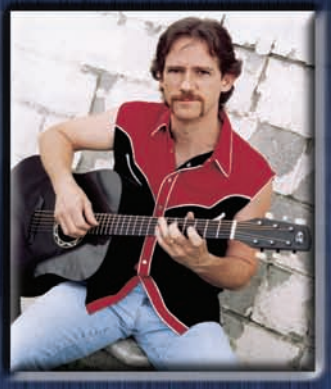

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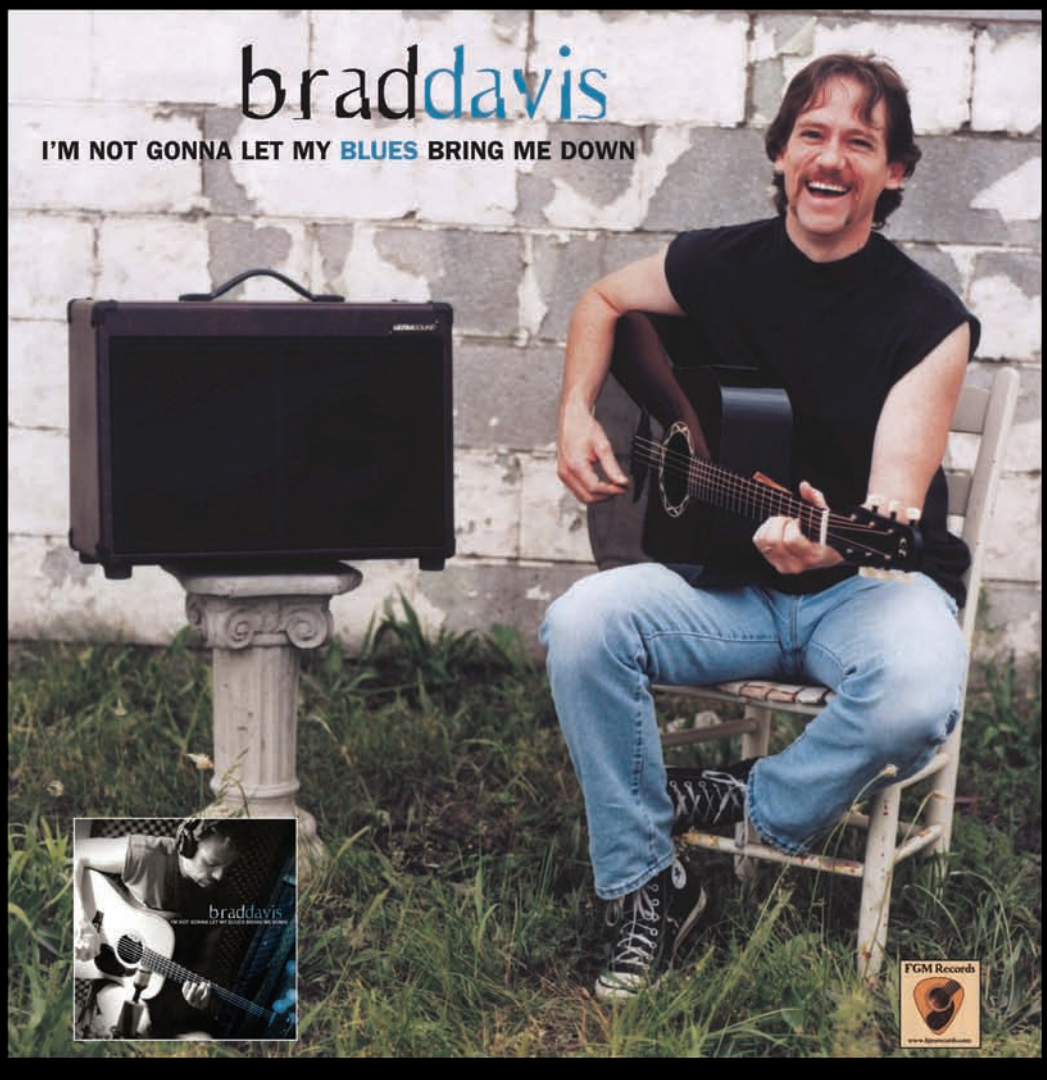

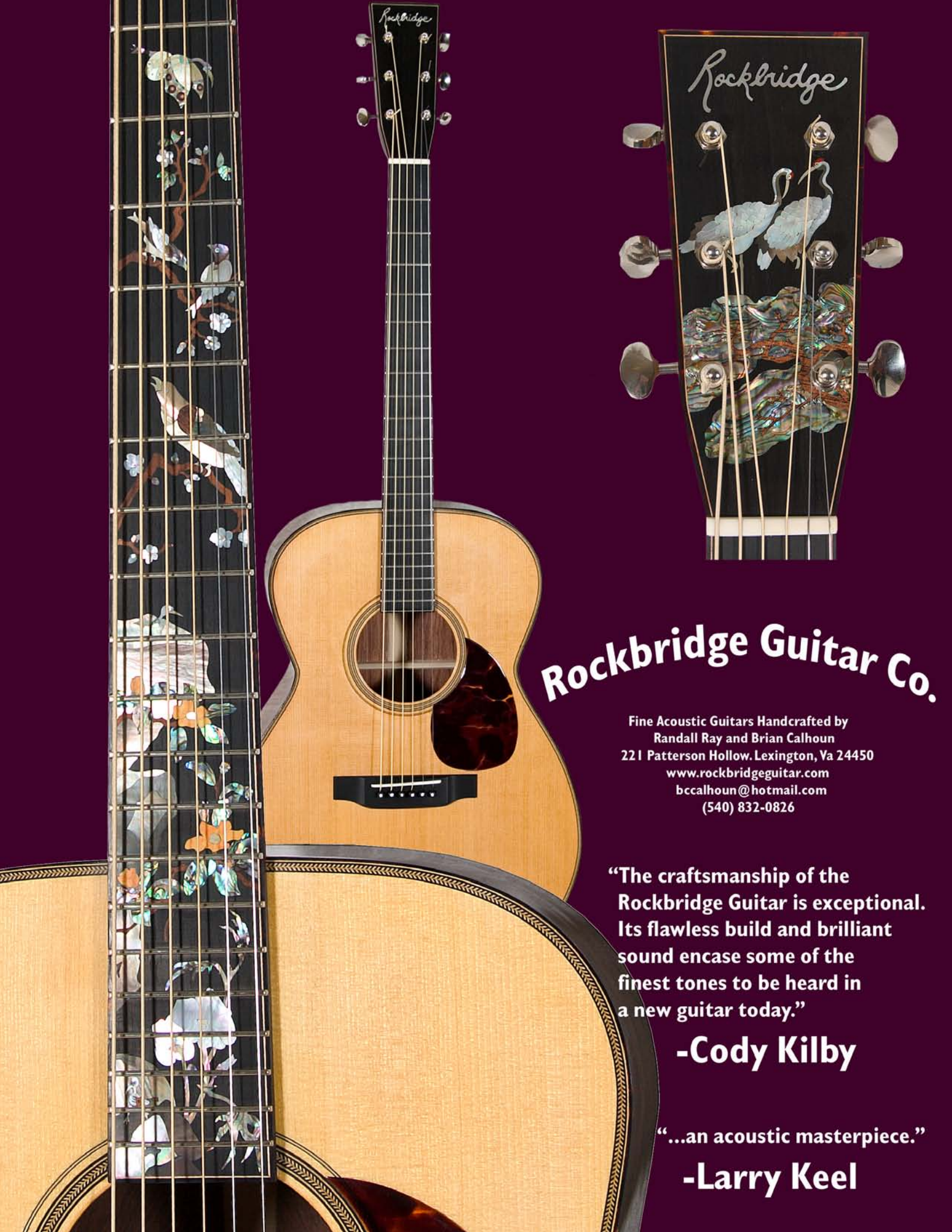

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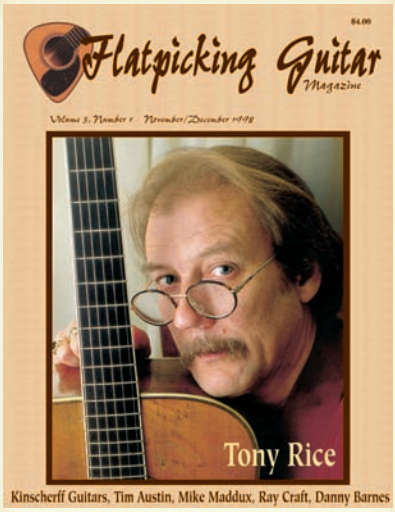

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– written on a HD-28V alone in a hotel room at the end of a 48-date tour, 2001.

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